

For Six Month Period Ending Aug. 31, 2008  
(Insert date)

**I - REGISTRANT**

1. (a) Name of Registrant

(b) Registration No. 5609

Venezuela Information Office, LLC

(c) Business Address(es) of Registrant

2000 P St., NW Suite 240  
Washington DC 20036

2. Has there been a change in the information previously furnished in connection with the following:

(a) If an individual:

(1) Residence address(es) Yes ☐  
(2) Citizenship Yes ☐  
(3) Occupation Yes ☐

No ☐  
No ☐  
No ☐

(b) If an organization:

(1) Name Yes ☐  
(2) Ownership or control Yes ☐  
(3) Branch offices Yes ☐

No ☒  
No ☒  
No ☒

(c) Explain fully all changes, if any, indicated in items (a) and (b) above.

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**IF THE REGISTRANT IS AN INDIVIDUAL, OMIT RESPONSE TO ITEMS 3, 4 AND 5(a).**

3. If you have previously filed Exhibit C<sup>1</sup>, state whether any changes therein have occurred during this 6 month reporting period.

Yes ☐ No ☐

If yes, have you filed an amendment to the Exhibit C? Yes ☐ No ☐

If no, please attach the required amendment.

4. (a) Have any persons ceased acting as partners, officers, directors or similar officials of the registrant during this 6 month reporting period? Yes ☐ No ☒

If yes, furnish the following information:

Name	Position	Date connection ended
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- (b) Have any persons become partners, officers, directors or similar officials during this 6 month reporting period? Yes ☐ No ☒

If yes, furnish the following information:

Name	Residence address	Citizenship	Position	Date assumed
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5. (a) Has any person named in item 4(b) rendered services directly in furtherance of the interests of any foreign principal? Yes ☐ No ☒

If yes, identify each such person and describe his service.

- (b) Have any employees or individuals, who have filed a short form registration statement, terminated their employment or connection with the registrant during this 6 month reporting period? Yes ☒ No ☐

If yes, furnish the following information:

Name	Position or connection	Date terminated
Natal Fani	Assistant Director	8/31/08

- (c) During this 6 month reporting period, has the registrant hired as employees or in any other capacity, any persons who rendered or will render services to the registrant directly in furtherance of the interests of any foreign principal(s) in other than a clerical or secretarial, or in a related or similar capacity? Yes ☐ No ☒

If yes, furnish the following information:

Name	Residence address	Citizenship	Position	Date assumed
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6. Have short form registration statements been filed by all of the persons named in Items 5(a) and 5(c) of the supplemental statement? Yes ☒ No ☐

If no, list names of persons who have not filed the required statement.

## II - FOREIGN PRINCIPAL

7. Has your connection with any foreign principal ended during this 6 month reporting period?

Yes ☐

No ☒

If yes, furnish the following information:

Name of foreign principal

Date of termination

8. Have you acquired any new foreign principal<sup>2</sup> during this 6 month reporting period?

Yes ☐

No ☒

If yes, furnish the following information:

Name and address of foreign principal

Date acquired

9. In addition to those named in Items 7 and 8, if any, list foreign principals<sup>2</sup> whom you continued to represent during the 6 month reporting period.

*Embassy of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela*

### 10. EXHIBITS A AND B

(a) Have you filed for each of the newly acquired foreign principals in Item 8 the following:

Exhibit A<sup>3</sup>

Yes ☐

No ☐

Exhibit B<sup>4</sup>

Yes ☐

No ☐

*N/A*

If no, please attach the required exhibit.

(b) Have there been any changes in the Exhibits A and B previously filed for any foreign principal whom you represented during the 6 month period?

Yes ☐

No ☒

If yes, have you filed an amendment to these exhibits?

Yes ☐

No ☐

If no, please attach the required amendment.

<sup>2</sup> The term "foreign principal" includes, in addition to those defined in Section 1(b) of the Act, an individual organization any of whose activities are directly or indirectly supervised, directed, controlled, financed, or subsidized in whole or in major part by a foreign government, foreign political party, foreign organization or foreign individual. (See Rule 100(a) (9).) A registrant who represents more than one foreign principal is required to list in the statements he files under the Act only those principals for whom he is not entitled to claim exemption under Section 3 of the Act. (See Rule 208.)

<sup>3</sup> The Exhibit A, which is filed on Form NSD-3 (Formerly CRM-157), sets forth the information required to be disclosed concerning each foreign principal.

<sup>4</sup> The Exhibit B, which is filed on Form NSD-4 (Formerly CRM-155), sets forth the information concerning the agreement or understanding between the registrant and the foreign principal.

## III - ACTIVITIES

11. During this 6 month reporting period, have you engaged in any activities for or rendered any services to any foreign principal named in Items 7, 8, and 9 of this statement? Yes ☒ No ☐

If yes, identify each such foreign principal and describe in full detail your activities and services:

Embassy of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela.  
All activities were of a political nature and are described in response to item 12 of Section III.  
(see attachment)

12. During this 6 month reporting period, have you on behalf of any foreign principal engaged in political activity<sup>5</sup> as defined below? Yes ☒ No ☐

If yes, identify each such foreign principal and describe in full detail all such political activity, indicating, among other things, the relations, interests and policies sought to be influenced and the means employed to achieve this purpose. If the registrant arranged, sponsored or delivered speeches, lectures or radio and TV broadcasts, give details as to dates and places of delivery, names of speakers and subject matter.

see log attached.

13. In addition to the above described activities, if any, have you engaged in activity on your own behalf which benefits any or all of your foreign principals? Yes ☐ No ☒

If yes, describe fully.

<sup>5</sup> The term "political activities" means any activity that the person engaging in believes will, or that the person intends to, in any way influence any agency or official of the Government of the United States or any section of the public within the United States with reference to formulating, adopting or changing the domestic or foreign policies of the United States or with reference to the political or public interests, policies, or relations of a government of a foreign country or a foreign political party.

## IV - FINANCIAL INFORMATION

## 14. (a) RECEIPTS - MONIES

During this 6 month reporting period, have you received from any foreign principal named in Items 7, 8, or 9 of this statement, or from any other source, for or in the interests of any such foreign principal, any contributions, income or money either as compensation or otherwise? Yes ☒ No ☐

If no, explain why.

If yes, set forth below in the required detail and separately for each foreign principal an account of such monies<sup>6</sup>.

Date	From whom	Purpose	Amount
5/19/08	Venezuelan Embassy	Operating Expenses	\$247,000. <sup>00</sup>
6/24/08	"	"	\$261,000. <sup>00</sup>
8/28/08	"	"	\$486,000. <sup>00</sup>
			<u>\$814,000.<sup>00</sup></u>
			Total

## (b) RECEIPTS - FUND RAISING CAMPAIGN

During this 6 month reporting period, have you received, as part of a fund raising campaign<sup>7</sup>, any money on behalf of any foreign principal named in items 7, 8, or 9 of this statement? Yes ☐ No ☒

If yes, have you filed an Exhibit D<sup>8</sup> to your registration? Yes ☐ No ☐

If yes, indicate the date the Exhibit D was filed. Date \_\_\_\_\_

## (c) RECEIPTS - THINGS OF VALUE

During this 6 month reporting period, have you received any thing of value<sup>9</sup> other than money from any foreign principal named in Items 7, 8, or 9 of this statement, or from any other source, for or in the interests of any such foreign principal?

Yes ☐ No ☒

If yes, furnish the following information:

Name of foreign principal	Date received	Description of thing of value	Purpose
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6, 7 A registrant is required to file an Exhibit D if he collects or receives contributions, loans, money, or other things of value for a foreign principal, as part of a fund raising campaign. (See Rule 201(e).)

8 An Exhibit D, for which no printed form is provided, sets forth an account of money collected or received as a result of a fund raising campaign and transmitted for a foreign principal.

9 Things of value include but are not limited to gifts, interest free loans, expense free travel, favored stock purchases, exclusive rights, favored treatment over competitors, "kickbacks," and the like.

15. (a) **DISBURSEMENTS – MONIES**

During this 6 month reporting period, have you

(1) disbursed or expended monies in connection with activity on behalf of any foreign principal named in Items 7, 8, or 9 of this statement? Yes ☒ No ☐(2) transmitted monies to any such foreign principal? Yes ☐ No ☒

If no, explain in full detail why there were no disbursements made on behalf of any foreign principal.

If yes, set forth below in the required detail and separately for each foreign principal an account of such monies, including monies transmitted, if any, to each foreign principal.

Date	To whom	Purpose	Amount
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see attachment 15a.

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Total

**(b) DISBURSEMENTS – THINGS OF VALUE**

During this 6 month reporting period, have you disposed of anything of value<sup>10</sup> other than money in furtherance of or in connection with activities on behalf of any foreign principal named in Items 7, 8, or 9 of this statement?

Yes ☐No ☒

If yes, furnish the following information:

Date disposed	Name of person to whom given	On behalf of what foreign principal	Description of thing of value	Purpose
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**(c) DISBURSEMENTS – POLITICAL CONTRIBUTIONS**

During this 6 month reporting period, have you from your own funds and on your own behalf either directly or through any other person, made any contributions of money or other things of value<sup>11</sup> in connection with an election to any political office, or in connection with any primary election, convention, or caucus held to select candidates for political office?

Yes ☐No ☒

If yes, furnish the following information:

Date	Amount or thing of value	Name of political organization	Name of candidate
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<sup>10, 11</sup> Things of value include but are not limited to gifts, interest free loans, expense free travel, favored stock purchases, exclusive rights, favored treatment over competitors, "kickbacks" and the like.

## V - INFORMATIONAL MATERIALS

16. During this 6 month reporting period, did you prepare, disseminate or cause to be disseminated any informational materials<sup>12</sup>?  
 Yes ☒ No ☐

IF YES, RESPOND TO THE REMAINING ITEMS IN SECTION V.

17. Identify each such foreign principal.

Embassy of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela

18. During this 6 month reporting period, has any foreign principal established a budget or allocated a specified sum of money to finance your activities in preparing or disseminating informational materials? Yes ☒ No ☐

If yes, identify each such foreign principal, specify amount, and indicate for what period of time.

Embassy of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela  
 Amount \$814,000.<sup>00</sup>  
 Period 3/1/08 - 8/31/08

19. During this 6 month reporting period, did your activities in preparing, disseminating or causing the dissemination of informational materials include the use of any of the following:

- |                                                            |                                                                    |                                                                     |                                                          |
|------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Radio or TV broadcasts | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Magazine or newspaper articles | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Motion picture films            | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Letters or telegrams |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Advertising campaigns  | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Press releases                 | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Pamphlets or other publications | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Lectures or speeches |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Internet               | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (specify) _____                     |                                                                     |                                                          |

20. During this 6 month reporting period, did you disseminate or cause to be disseminated informational materials among any of the following groups:

- |                                                         |                                                                  |                                                              |
|---------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public officials    | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Newspapers                   | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Libraries                |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Legislators         | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Editors                      | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Educational institutions |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Government agencies | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Civic groups or associations | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Nationality groups       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other (specify) _____          |                                                                  |                                                              |

21. What language was used in the informational materials:

☒ English

☒ Other (specify)

Spanish

22. Did you file with the Registration Unit, U.S. Department of Justice a copy of each item of such informational materials disseminated or caused to be disseminated during this 6 month reporting period? Yes ☒ No ☐

23. Did you label each item of such informational materials with the statement required by Section 4(b) of the Act?

Yes ☒

No ☐

12 The term informational materials includes any oral, visual, graphic, written, or pictorial information or matter of any kind, including that published by means of advertising, books, periodicals, newspapers, lectures, broadcasts, motion pictures, or any means or instrumentality of interstate or foreign commerce or otherwise. Informational materials disseminated by an agent of a foreign principal as part of an activity in itself exempt from registration, or an activity which by itself would not require registration, need not be filed pursuant to Section 4(b) of the Act.



**VI – EXECUTION**

In accordance with 28 U.S.C. §1746, the undersigned swear(s) or affirm(s) under penalty of perjury that he/she has (they have) read the information set forth in this registration statement and the attached exhibits and that he/she is (they are) familiar with the contents thereof and that such contents are in their entirety true and accurate to the best of his/her (their) knowledge and belief, except that the undersigned make(s) no representation as to the truth or accuracy of the information contained in the attached Short Form Registration Statement(s), if any, insofar as such information is not within his/her (their) personal knowledge.

(Date of signature )

(Type or print name under each signature<sup>13</sup>)

8/23/08

Olivia B. Goumbri

Olivia B. Goumbri

<sup>13</sup> This statement shall be signed by the individual agent, if the registrant is an individual, or by a majority of those partners, officers, directors or persons performing similar functions, if the registrant is an organization, except that the organization can, by power of attorney, authorize one or more individuals to execute this statement on its behalf.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE  
FARA REGISTRATION UNIT  
NATIONAL SECURITY DIVISION  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20530

**NOTICE**

Please answer the following questions and return this sheet in triplicate with your Supplemental Statement:

1. Is your answer to Item 16 of Section V (Informational Materials – page 8 of Form NSD-2, formerly Form CRM-154 Supplemental Statement):

YES ✓ or NO \_\_\_\_\_

(If your answer to question 1 is "yes" do not answer question 2 of this form.)

2. Do you disseminate any material in connection with your registration:

YES \_\_\_\_\_ or NO \_\_\_\_\_

(If your answer to question 2 is "yes" please forward for our review copies of all material including: films, film catalogs, posters, brochures, press releases, etc. which you have disseminated during the past six months.)

Olivia B. Goumbri 8/23/08  
Signature Date

Olivia B. Goumbri

Please type or print name of  
Signatory on the line above

Executive Director  
Title

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U.S. Department of Justice

National Security Division

Washington, DC 20530

THIS FORM IS TO BE AN OFFICIAL ATTACHMENT TO YOUR CURRENT SUPPLEMENTAL  
STATEMENT - PLEASE EXECUTE IN TRIPLICATE

SHORT-FORM REGISTRATION INFORMATION SHEET

SECTION A

The Department records list active short-form registration statements for the following persons of your organization filed on the date indicated by each name. If a person is not still functioning in the same capacity directly on behalf of the foreign principal, please show the date of termination.

**Short Form List for Registrant: Venezuela Information Office, LLC**

Last Name	First Name and Other Names	Registration Date	Termination Date	Role
Gilmond	Isaura	03/18/2004		
Goumbri	Olivia B.	11/22/2005		
Fani	Natali d.	01/10/2007	8/31/08	Associate Director
Morrissey	Megan D.	03/21/2007		

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U.S. Department of Justice

National Security Division

Washington, DC 20530

SECTION B

In addition to those persons listed in Section A, list below all current employees rendering services directly on behalf of the foreign principals(s) who have not filed short-form registration statements. (Do not list clerks, secretaries, typists or employees in a similar or related capacity). If there is some question as to whether an employee has an obligation to file a short-form, please address a letter to the Registration Unit describing the activities and connection with the foreign principal.

Name	Function	Date Hired

Signature: Olivia B. Bauman Date: 8/23/08  
Title: Executive Director

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**Venezuela Information Office, LLC**

**Reg. #5609**

**Supplemental Statement - Financial Information - Insert for page 6**

**For Six Month Period Ending August 2008**

**Section IV , 15 (a) Disbursements**

<b>Expenses</b>	<b>Amount Paid</b>
<b>Operating Expenses</b>	<b>\$328,379.59</b>
<b>Travel &amp; Transportation</b>	<b>\$37,130.95</b>
<b>Administrative Services</b>	<b>\$11,101.18</b>
<b>Office Suplies</b>	<b>\$13,158.99</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$389,770.71</b>

**Complementary Information:**

- 1- No U.S. Government Officials or media representatives were guest.**
- 2- No disbursements made to sub-contractors.**

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<b>FARA Reporting Log-VIO</b>			<b>Olivia Goumbri March 2008 to August 2008</b>			
<b>Date</b>	<b>Person Contacted</b>	<b>Position/Title</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Contacted</b>	<b>Subject Discussed</b>	<b>Position Advocated</b>
3-Mar-08	Linda Ramirez	lawyers	National Lawyers Guild	Email	Visit by Ambassador to FL	Organize a meeting with Ambassador
3-Mar-08	Julie Ruben	Coordinator	Left Forum	Email/Phone	Left Forum panels	hold panel with recommended speaker
3-Mar-08	Shirley Pate	HCV Project	President	Email	BBC interview	post a comment about it on website
2-Mar-08	general public		BBC	radio	Venezuela	respect Venezuela
3-Mar-08	students		Northern Virginia Community College	in person	Venezuelan history	respect Venezuela
4-Mar-08	VIO News & Action Northern VA area			Email	upcoming events	attend and participate
5-Mar-08	News & Action list serve			email	Andean Conflict	Contact Congress members to condemn Colombia intervention in region
5-Mar-08	Eric Ruben	activist	independent	email	visit by Ambassador to FL	can you help set up meetings
5-Mar-08	Beverly Neile	Executive Director	NAACP Orlando	Email/Phone	visit by Ambassador to FL	organize meeting with NAACP in Orlando
5-Mar-08	list serve contacts	general public		Email	Andean Conflict	write congressmen in support of peace
5-Mar-08	Harry Vanden	professor	USF	email	visit by Ambassador to FL	organize talk for Ambassador at USF
6-Mar-08	Liz Harper	Producer	Newshour	email	Colombia/Ecuador/Venezuela	interview recommended expert
6-Mar-08	Jim Keller	reverend	PDA	email/phone	Venezuela conference	meet with congressmen while there
6-Mar-08	Miguel Luna	Providence City Council member	City of Providence, RI	phone/email	Venezuela conference	attend and participate
6-Mar-08	conference attendees		Left Forum	in person	Chavez	support Venezuelan democracy
6-Mar-08	Dale Sorenson	Director	Marin Interfaith Task Force	phone/email	Venezuela conference	organize lobby day
6-Mar-08	Nicole Lee	Director	TransAfrica Forum	in person	delegation to Venezuela	organize it
7-Mar-08	Chris Lydon	Radio Host	Brown University	email	radio show	interview recommended expert
7-Mar-08	Kirsten Clanton	lawyer	NLG	phone	Ambassador tour to FL	organize event with lawyers
8-Mar-08	Dr. Armstrong	professor	University of FL	in person	Ambassador tour to FL	organize a university event
9-Mar-08	Debra Booth	member	AFL-CIO	in person	Ambassador tour to FL	organize an event with Ambassador
10-Mar-08	Linda Ramirez	lawyer	NLG	phone	Ambassador tour to FL	organize university event
11-Mar-08	Eric Ruben	activist		email	Ambassador tour to FL	set up meetings
11-Mar-08	Jennifer Wager	film maker		Email	upcoming NY visit	meet with activists
17-Mar-08	Rudy Rasmus	Pastor	St John Church	in person	Venezuela delegation	organize a delegation
18-Mar-08	America Maldonada	director	TransAfrica Forum	Email	delegation to Venezuela	do a hip hop delegation
19-Mar-08	Sujatha Fernandes	Professor	Brooklyn College	Email	Venezuela advancements	writing an op-ed on Venezuela

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19-Mar-08	Dale Sorenson	Director	Marin Interfaith Task Force	Email	lobby day	send out invite
19-Mar-08	Liz Harper	Producer	Newshour	Email	Venezuela media coverage	interview recommended expert
19-Mar-08	Chuck Kauffman	coordinator	Nicaqragua Network	Email	Venezuela blog	send around to contacts
19-Mar-08	Harry Vanden	Professor	USF-Tampa	email	Ambassador tour to FL	organize event at university
20-Mar-08	Jennifer Wager	film maker		Email	human rights event	attend and make comment
24-Mar-08	Jim Keller	reverend	PDA	Email	Venezuela events	author and submit op-ed on Venezuela
24-Mar-08	Eric Wingerter	writer	BoRev	email	blog	link to blog
26-Mar-08	Walter Leaphart	Manager	Public Enemy	phone	delegation to Venezuela	organize it
26-Mar-08	Nicole Lee	Director	TransAfrica Forum	phone	delegation to Venezuela	organize it
26-Mar-08	Beverly Neile	Director	NAACP Orlando	Email	Ambassador tour to FL	organize meeting with NAACP in Orlando
26-Mar-08	John Maluco	lawyer	NLG	Email	Ambassador tour to FL	organize meeting with lawyers & community
27-Mar-08	News & Action list serve			email	bias Post articles and state sponsor of terror designation	send letter to elected officials in support of Venezuela
28-Mar-08	Shirley Pate	coordinator	HCV project	Email	action alert	forward to contacts
31-Mar-08	Eric Ruben	activist		Email	Ambassador tour to FL	promote public events of Ambassador
1-Apr-08	list serve contacts in metro LA			email	upcoming Venezuela events	attend
1-Apr-08	list serve contacts in metro DC			email	upcoming Venezuela events	attend
6-Apr-08	Alizza Punzalin	event coordinator	Eckered College	Phone/email	visit by Ambassador to FL	organize event at college
9-Apr-08	VIO News & Action list serve			email	upcoming events	join local events
14-Apr-08	Rev. Yearwood	coordinator	Hip Hop Caucus	Email	Venezuela hip hop group	attend dinner with group
15-Apr-08	list serve metro DC			email	Venezuela hip hop group	attend concert at Howard University
15-Apr-08	David Conforto	lawyer	National Lawyers Guild	Email	Venezuela current events	submit op-ed
16-Apr-08	David Rich	staffer	US Congress	email	Hill briefing on Venezuela	attend
16-Apr-08	Jason Steinbaum	staffer	US Congress	email	Hill briefing on Venezuela	attend
17-Apr-08	Babette Grunow	organizer	Bolivarian Circle WI	Email	meeting at conference	organize meeting for activists
19-Apr-08	VSN Conference attendees		Venezuela Solidarity Network Conference	in person	Venezuelan media	support Venezuela's advances in press freedom
20-Apr-08	VSN lobby day participants	activists	VSN	in person	Venezuela current events	talk with Congress members about social advances being made in Venezuela
24-Apr-08	VIO News & Action			Email	NY Times misleading coverage	write a letter to the editor
30-Apr-08	Kirsten Clanton	lawyer	NLG	email	Fall event with Ambassador	organize the event
30-Apr-08	Beverly Neile	director	NAACP Orlando	email	follow up to visit	write oped for local paper
30-Apr-08	Linda Ramirez	lawyer	NLG	email	delegation to Venezuela	organize delegation with lawyers

6-May-08	Olga Vives	Vice President	NOW	email	NOW conference in summer	invite suggested Venezuela officials
6-May-08	John Pilger	film maker	independent	email	new film on poverty	distribute in the US
6-May-08	Peter Cohn	lawyer	NAACP	email	Venezuelan music concert	attend and publicize
6-May-08	Mary Radcliffe	editor	San Fran Bayview	email	Venezuela concert	attend and publicize
7-May-08	News & Action list serve San Fran metro			email	Venezuela concert and forum	attend and participate
7-May-08	News & Action list serve DC metro			email	Venezuela concert and forum	attend and participate
12-May-08	Liste serve DC metro area			Email	upcoming Venezuela forum	attend and participate
15-May-08	News & Action List Serve			Email	Interpol findings	call media and Congress members
14-May-08	Bob Schwartz	producer	Dan Rather Report	email/phone	Interview with Chavez	Set up meeting with Dan Rather and Ambassador
20-May-08	Bob Snyder	activist	VSN	email	bias Wash Post article	write a letter to the editor
20-May-08	Charlie Serrano	activist	VSN	email	Sister Cities	organize group for sister cities
20-May-08	Miguel Luna	councilman in Providence	Providence, RI	email	current events	write and op-ed
20-May-08	Rev. Keller	organizer	PDA	email	current events	ask member to sign letter
2-Jun-08	Doreen Massey	professor	Open University, UK	email	Latin American book	contribute
3-Jun-08	News & Action List Serve			Email	Venezuelan intelligence law	write a letter to the NY Times
10-Jun-08	Tasha Coleman	international affairs	NAACP	Email	trip to Venezuela	publish report on findings
10-Jun-08	Jim Green	Professor	Brown University	email/phone	Latin American book	contribute
12-Jun-08	Jan Strout	organizer	NOW	email	upcoming NOW conference	organize meeting with members
26-Jun-08	VIO News & Action			email	indpendence day	comment on new VIO blog
11-Jul-08	VIO News & Action			email	biased Post coverage	write a letter to the editor
11-Jul-08	Laurie Ann Schag	organizer	SWVRP	Email	Latino Congreso	help VIO staff meet people
11-Jul-08	Antonio Guitierrez	president	SWVRP	Email	Latino Congreso	help VIO staff meet people
14-Jul-08	Naomi Mitchell	community relations coordinator	Tommy Wells office	DC City Council	Citgo energy event	attend and support
14-Jul-08	Eleanor Holmes Norton	Congresswoman	US Congress	Email	Citgo energy event	attend and support
14-Jul-08	Liste serve DC metro area			Email	Citgo energy event	attend and support
16-Jul-08	News & Action Houston metro area			email	Citgo energy event	attend and support



17-Jul-08	Debra Booth	organizer	AFL-CIO	email	labor issues in Venezuela	invite labor attache to speak
18-Jul-08	Walter Leaphart	Manager	Public Enemy	Email	Venezuela events	organize delegation
July 23-26, 2008	Unity Conference Attendees	journalists		in person	Venezuela press freedoms and community press	organize a delegation to Venezuela
28-Jul-08	Jill Hokanson	organizer	VSN	email	biased press	write letter to editor
28-Jul-08	Chuck Kauffman	coordinator	Nicaragua Network	Email	biased press	write letter to editor
28-Jul-08	Banbose Shango	organizer	VSN	Email	biased press	write letter to editor
29-Jul-08	Bill Warehouse	journalists	Minnestoa Public Radio	Email	Venezuela coverage	cover more social stories
29-Jul-08	Amy Hiatt	journalists	Minnestoa Public Radio	email	Venezuela coverage	cover social stories
29-Jul-08	Karen Michel	president	Unity	email	Venezuela press interests	organize a delegation of journalists
1-Aug-08	VIO News & Action DC metro region			email	Community event with Citgo	attend and support
7-Aug-08	Jay Nightwolf	radio talk show host	WPFW	email	visit by Indigenous Venezuelan official	interview official on show
8-Aug-08	VIO News & Action list serve			email	ICG Report on Venezuela	share VIO fact sheet with contacts
20-Aug-08	Reverend Rivera	reverend	LPAC Ministries	Email	religious issues in Venezuela	organize delegation
25-Aug-08	Jennifer Wager	film maker	independent	email	media in Venezuela	organize delegation of community film makers
28-Aug-08	VIO News & Action list serve			Email	LA Times coverage of Venezuela	write a letter to the editor
29-Aug-08	Paulo Gusmao	international affairs	LAWG	email	current events in Venezuela	organize meeting with LAWG director
29-Aug-08	Karen Dolan	staff member	IPS	email	Venezuela sister cities	organize meeting

FARA Reporting Log-VIO		Megan Morrissey March 2008 to August 2008				
Date	Person Contacted	Position/Title	Organization	Contact	Subject Discussed	Position Advocated
3/4/08	Tyler Bridges	Journalist	Miami Herald	email	coverage of Venezuela	use VIO resources
3/4/08	Dave Lindorff	Journalist	CounterPunch	email	letter to editor	write to the Washington Times
3/4/08	David Sands	Journalist	Washington Times	email	defense spending	use VIO resources
3/4/08	Martin Arostegui	Journalist	Washington Times	email	coverage of Venezuela	use VIO resources
3/4/08	David Sands	Journalist	Washington Times	call	coverage of Venezuela	use VIO resources
3/5/08	Media contacts	Journalists	Various	email	VIO press release	sent press release to media
3/5/08	Media contacts	Journalists	Various	email	Venezuela-Colombia	interview VIO Director
3/7/08	Andy Soltis	Journalist	New York Post	email	coverage of Venezuela	use VIO resources
3/11/08	Tamour Kahn	Journalist	Harper's	call	Venezuelan budget	use VIO resources
3/11/08	Helen Murphy	Journalist	Bloomberg	email	coverage of Venezuela	use VIO resources
3/11/08	Matthew Walter	Journalist	Bloomberg	email	coverage of Venezuela	use VIO resources
3/11/08	Alex Grant	Activist	Hands Off Venezuela Canada	email	blog post on Venezuela	comment on a blog
3/12/08	Jim Keller	Reverend		email	op-ed	write an op-ed
3/16/08	Alexander Dwinell	Editor	South End Press	met	book project	consider a book project
3/17/08	Fernando Coronil	Professor	University of Michigan	email	nationalizations	use VIO resources
3/19/08	Academics list	Professors	Various	email	Ven. Solidarity Netwo	attend VSN event
3/19/08	Katherine Lucas Sr	Administrator	Georgetown University	email	Ven. Solidarity Netwo	list VSN event in newsletter
3/19/08	Seth Weiss	Editor	Monthly Review Press	email	book event	hold book event for Eva Golinger
3/19/08	Chuck Kaufman	Activist	Venezuela Solidarity Network	email	book event	hold book event for Eva Golinger
3/19/08	Don Allen	Events	Busboys and Poets	email	book event	hold book event for Eva Golinger
3/19/08	Alex Grant	Activist	Hands Off Venezuela Canada	email	HOV events	send events calendar
3/25/08	Andrew Pollack	Activist	Socialist Review	email	VIO news roundups	sign up for news roundups
3/26/08	Roberto Lovato	Blogger	New American Media	email	VIO culture blog	link to VenWorld blog
3/31/08	James Ingham	Journalist	BBC	email	coverage of Venezuela	use VIO resources
3/31/08	Julie McCarthy	Journalist	National Public Radio	email	coverage of Venezuela	use VIO resources
4/2/08	Lesley Gill	Professor	American University	email	guest lecture	host guest lecture
4/2/08	Cynthia McClintock	Professor	George Washington	email	guest lecture	host guest lecture
4/2/08	Katherine Lucas Sr	Professor	Georgetown University	email	guest lecture	host guest lecture
4/2/08	Paul Tennessee	Professor	University of DC	email	guest lecture	host guest lecture
4/2/08	Quito Swan	Professor	Howard University	email	guest lecture	host guest lecture
4/4/08	Steve Ellner	Professor	Universidad del Oriente	email	guest lecture	give lectures in DC
4/7/08	Timothy Gatto	Blogger	LiberalPro Radio	email	interview request	interview VIO Director
4/8/08	Marua Possley	Journalist	Bradenton Herald	email	coverage of Venezuela	cover April 11th events
4/9/08	Media contacts	Journalists	Various	email	Ven. Solidarity Netwo	attend VSN event

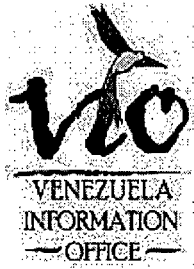
4/10/08	Jose Patino Girona	Reporter	South Tampa News & Tribune	email	coverage of Venezuela	cover April 11th events
4/10/08	Gregory Weeks	Blogger	UNC	email	VIO culture blog	link to VenWorld blog
4/14/08	Nestor Ikeda	Journalist	Associated Press	call	Ven. Solidarity Netwo	attend VSN event
4/15/08	Media contacts	Journalists	Various	email	women in Venezuela	VIO fact sheet to media
4/24/08	Henry Gaddis	Activist		sent	Venezuelan constituti	use VIO resources
5/8/08	Media contacts	Journalists	Various	call	Vasallos del Sol conc	attend concert in L.A.
5/12/08	Valentina Figuera	Director	Minci	email	presidential speech	provide copy of speech
5/12/08	Fernando Coronil	Professor	University of Michigan	email	presidential speech	use presidential speech
5/14/08	Gregory Wilpert	Activist	Venezuelanalysis	email	VIO culture blog	link to VenWorld blog
5/15/08	John Blount	Journalist	Bloomberg	email	VIO resources	use VIO resources
5/15/08	Jesus Rivas	Professor	Kentucky Herald	email	op-ed	keep writing op-eds
5/15/08	Media contacts	Journalists	Various	email	terrorism allegations	VIO fact sheet to media
5/16/08	Alejandra Labanca	Journalist	Miami Herald	email	coverage of Venezuela	use VIO resources
5/16/08	David Adams	Journalist	St. Petersburg Times	email	coverage of Venezuela	use VIO resources
5/19/08	Mark Fitzgerald	Editor	Editor and Publisher Magazine	email	media in Venezuela	read articles on Venezuela
5/19/08	Robert Naiman	Journalist	Huffington Post	email	media in Venezuela	read articles on Venezuela
5/19/08	Nestor Ikeda	Journalist	Associated Press	email	IPS event	attend event at IPS
5/19/08	Andrew Sullivan	Journalist	The Atlantic	email	media in Venezuela	read articles on Venezuela
5/19/08	Matthew Yglesias	Journalist	The Atlantic	email	media in Venezuela	read articles on Venezuela
5/19/08	Charlotte Hall	Journalist	Orlando Sentinel	call	media in Venezuela	read articles on Venezuela
5/19/08	Jon Jonakin	Professor	Tennessee Tech	email	letter to editor	write to the New York Times
5/19/08	Michael Lebowitz	Professor	Simon Fraser University	email	letter to editor	write to the New York Times
5/20/08	Charlotte Hall	Journalist	Orlando Sentinel	email	VIO news roundups	sign up for news roundups
5/20/08	Margaret Sullivan	Journalist	Buffalo News	email	VIO news roundups	sign up for news roundups
5/20/08	Edward Seaton	Journalist	Manhattan Mercury	email	VIO news roundups	sign up for news roundups
5/21/08	Stephen Lendman	Activist		email	VIO culture blog	link to VenWorld blog
5/22/08	Roberto Lovato	Blogger	Huffington Post	email	VIO culture blog	link to VenWorld blog
5/27/08	T.M. Scruggs	Professor	University of Iowa	email	VIO culture blog	link to VenWorld blog
5/30/08	Frank Daniel	Journalist	Reuters	email	VIO news roundups	sign up for news roundups
6/4/08	Francisco Domingue	Member	Venezuela Information Centre	email	articles on Venezuela	send articles
6/4/08	Jesus Rivas	Professor	Kentucky Herald	email	Citgo	use VIO resources
6/5/08	National Conference on Media Reform		(Minneapolis)	attended		sign up for news roundups
6/9/08	Diane Hodges	Interviewer	Al Jazeera in English	email	VIO interviews	interview VIO Director
6/11/08	Alex Grant	Activist	Hands Off Venezuela Canada	email	letter to editor	write a letter to the editor
6/11/08	Justin Podur	Writer	Znet	email	letter to editor	write a letter to the editor
6/11/08	Jay Hartling	Student	University of Victoria	email	letter to editor	write a letter to the editor
6/12/08	Steve Leibowitz	Fellow	Woodcock Foundation	email	media contacts	provide radio contact

6/13/08	Josh Burek	Op-ed Editor	Christian Science Monitor	call	op-ed	consider a VIO op-ed
6/13/08	Dustin Hinz	Student	Augsburg University	email	VIO news roundups	sign up for news roundups
6/18/08	John Otis	Journalist	Houston Chronicle	email	coverage of Venezuela	use VIO resources
6/18/08	James Ingham	Journalist	BBC	email	coverage of Venezuela	write about Venezuela
6/19/08	Karen Kimball	Scheduler	PBS, Bill Moyers News Journal	email	coverage of Venezuela	interview VIO Director
6/23/08	Personal Democracy Forum (New York)			attended	VIO news roundups	sign up for news roundups
6/25/08	Chuck Kaufman	Activist	Venezuela Solidarity Network	email	VIO culture blog	link to VenWorld blog
6/25/08	Adam Isacson	Director	Center for International Policy	email	VIO culture blog	link to VenWorld blog
6/26/08	Scott Thill	Journalist	Wired Magazine	email	coverage of Venezuela	write about Venezuela
6/26/08	Miguel Posani	Journalist	TeleSur	email	VIO delegation	meet a VIO delegation
6/26/08	Tonyaa Weatherbe	Columnist	Florida Times-Union	call	coverage of Venezuela	write about Venezuela
6/27/08	Don Hazen	Editor	Alternet	email	op-ed	consider VIO column
6/27/08	Claudio Prado	Coordinator	Brazilian Digital Culture Lab	email	media conference	provide info. on conference
6/27/08	Lisa Sabater	Blogger	Culture Kitchen blog	email	VIO culture blog	link to VenWorld blog
6/27/08	Tonyaa Weatherbe	Journalist	Florida Times-Union Columnist	email	VIO culture blog	read VenWorld blog
6/30/08	Sister Jenny Russiz	Activist	Fundalatin	email	VIO delegation	meet a VIO delegation
6/30/08	John Fund	Journalist	Wall Street Journal	email	coverage of Venezuela	use VIO resources
6/30/08	Jackson Diehl	Op-ed Writer	Washington Post	email	coverage of Venezuela	use VIO resources
6/30/08	Lisa Sullivan	Activist		email	VIO delegation	asked about driver
7/1/08	Chris Kraul	Journalist	Los Angeles Times	email	coverage of Venezuela	meet and talk
7/1/08	Benjamin Dangel	Journalist	UpsideDownWorld.org	email	VIO culture blog	link to VenWorld blog
7/1/08	Julio Vivas	Professor	Universidad Bolivariana	email	VIO delegation	meet a VIO delegation
7/1/08	Lennox Yearwood	Reverend	Hip Hop Caucus	email	VIO delegation	attend a VIO delegation
7/3/08	Chris Carlson	Blogger	Gringo in Caracas	email	VIO culture blog	link to VenWorld blog
7/3/08	Charlie Hardy	Blogger	Cowboy in Caracas	email	VIO culture blog	link to VenWorld blog
7/8/08	Juan Forero	Journalist	Washington Post	email	coverage of Venezuela	use VIO resources
7/8/08	James Ingham	Journalist	BBC	email	coverage of Venezuela	use VIO resources
7/9/08	Johann Hari	Journalist	The Independent	email	coverage of Venezuela	use VIO resources
7/9/08	Jesus Conde Martin	Representative	World Bank	email	World Bank statistics	hold a meeting
7/11/08	Rachel Jones	Journalist	Associated Press	email	coverage of Venezuela	sign up for news roundups
7/11/08		Editorial Team	Washington Post	email	op-ed	print a correction
7/11/08	Paulo Gusmao	Assistant	WOLA	email	VIO news roundups	sign up for news roundups
7/11/08	Greg Grandin	Professor	NYU	email	letter to editor	write to the Washington Post
7/14/08	Laurie Ann Schwag	Press Officer	Willie Velazquez Institute			
7/14/08	Media contacts	Journalists	Various	email	fact sheet on peace	VIO fact sheet to media
7/15/08	Angela Smith	Journalist	The Hilltop	email	coverage of Venezuela	use VIO resources
7/15/08	Jose Luis Magana	Photographer	Associated Press	email	Citgo event	send photos of event
7/18/08	Latino Congreso (Los Angeles)			attended		sign up for news roundups

8/11/08	Kim Scipes	Professor	Purdue University N. Central	email	book review	send a book review
8/11/08	Dan Hellinger	Professor	Webster University	email	travel to Venezuela	use VIO contacts
8/11/08	Steven Bodzin	Journalist	Bloomberg	email	VIO press release	use VIO press release
8/12/08	Jesus Conde Martin	Representative	World Bank	meeting	World Bank statistics	provide statistics on poverty
8/12/08	Teresa Sanders	Teacher	LA County Office of Education	email	letter to editor	write a letter to the editor
8/13/08	Armando Gudino	Director	KPFK Los Angeles	email	coverage of Venezuela	use VIO resources
8/13/08	Raquel Garcia	Press Officer	Earth Day Network	met	VIO delegation	attend VIO delegation
8/13/08	Media contacts	Journalists	Various	email	ICG report on Venezuela	VIO press release to media
8/14/08	Mike Ryan	Ph.D. Student	University of Maryland	meeting	VIO culture blog	contribute to VIO blog
8/15/08	Delicia Reynolds	Assistant	Congressman Sarbanes	email	VIO resources	asked to meet
8/15/08	Jesus Rivas	Professor	Kentucky Herald	email	op-ed	write another op-ed
8/18/08	Leonardo Garrido	Researcher	World Bank	email	VIO resources	use VIO resources
8/28/08	Chris Kraul	Journalist	Los Angeles Times	email	coverage of Venezuela	use VIO press release

<b>FARA Reporting Log-VIO</b>			<b>Natali Fani March - August 2008</b>			
<b>Date</b>	<b>Person Contacted</b>	<b>Position/Title</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Contacted</b>	<b>Subject Discussed</b>	<b>Position Advocated</b>
1-Mar-08	Tom Moore	Activists	Witness for Peace	email	contacts to reach out to a former Dever Mayor	Contacts to reach out to a former Denver Mayor to educate him on Venezuela
1-Mar-08	Williams Camacaro	Activists	Venezuelan Circle alberto Lovera	phone	rally in NY for Venezuela	Organize rally pro Venezuela in NYC
4-Mar-08	Robin Alexander	Labor Lawyer	United Electrical Workers	email	access to Labor Notes conference	Help to have a Venezuelan union leader speak at the Labor Notes Conference
4-Mar-08	Roger Hickey	Co Director	Campaign for Americas Future	email	panel at Our Future Conference	Have a panel on Latin America at the "Our Future" Conference
5-Mar-08	James Keller	Reverend	Retired	phone	Venezuela Solidarity Conference	Participate in the Conference and lobby in Congress
5-Mar-08	Maria Elisa Alvarez	Director	TeleSUR	email	transmit TeleSUR in the USA	work to have TeleSUR network be transmitted in the US
7-Mar-08	Tom Walker	Professor	Ohio University	email	film on Venezuela	Present a film on Venezuela's democracy to students/activists
10-Mar-08	Banbose Shango	Organizer	Venezuela Solidarity Network	phone	Events on Venezuela	Organize a Salsa Night pro Venezuela
21-Mar-08	Dale Sorensen	Activists	Venezuela Solidarity Network	phone	lobby day	organie a lobby day in Congress to educate Members about Venezuela's democracy
1-Apr-08	Francis Capuitura	Director	Transnational Institute for Grassroots	person	remittances from Venezuela	understanding more how companies that handle remittances work
2-Apr-08	Antonio Gonzalez	Director	Willie Velazquez Institute	phone	present at the Venezuela Solidarity Network Conference	have a presentation on the electoral process in Venezuela
4-Apr-08	Gustavo Torres	Director	CASA of Maryland	phone	Rally celebrating democracy	Attend the rally
4-Apr-08	Jon Liss	Director	Tenants and Workers United	phone	Rally celebrating democracy	Attend the rally
4-Apr-08	Abdul Kamus	President	DC Taxi Drivers	phone	Rally celebrating democracy	Attend the rally
4-Apr-08	Nicole Lee	Director	TransAfrica	phone	Rally celebrating democracy	Attend the rally
4-Apr-08	Fredy Tejada	Activists	SEIU	phone	Rally celebrating democracy	Attend the rally
4-Apr-08	Humberto Garces	Activists	Afro-Colombian Organization	phone	Rally celebrating democracy	Attend the rally
10-Apr-08	Steve Ellner	Professor	Retired	phone	speaking tour	speak at the Venezuela Solidarity Conference and to different universities in the DC area
15-Apr-08	Ryme Katkhouda	Media Activist	People's Media Center	person	Venezuela Solidarity Conference	Coordinate the high tech logistics
24-Apr-08	Milagro Andrade	Assistant	Inter American Development Bank	email	economic info on Venezuela	Obtain documents on updated data on Venezuela's economy
25-Apr-08	Daniel McAdams	Staffer	Congressman Ron Paul	email	US intervention	info on books related to US intervention in other nations
9-May-08	Vladimir Monge	Activists	community activist	email	radio hosts contacts in San Francisco	helping with obtaining radio access to present a Venezuelan cultural group in San Francisco
14-May-08	Cindy Domingo	Activists	WILF	email	speak at WILF conference	Speak on Venezuela at the WILF conference

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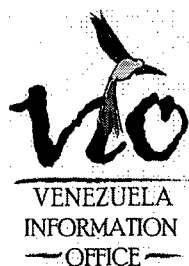


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## **Part I: Fact Sheets**



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## **VENEZUELA: TOWARD PEACEFUL DEMOCRACY AT HOME AND ABROAD**

In recent years, Venezuela has become an important advocate for peace, not just in South America, but throughout the world. Venezuela's commitment to peace is manifest in domestic programs that promote equality and citizen security, as well as global initiatives focusing on energy, food supply, and security cooperation.

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### **CHANGES AT HOME**

Since President Chávez was first elected in 1998, government policy has focused on transferring political power to citizens and redistributing wealth to bury the historical problem of poverty.

Oil revenues in Venezuela have traditionally benefited a small elite, but now they are used to fund "social missions," programs that provide low-income citizens with access to social services that are essential for economic and social development. About two dozen "missions" exist, and they address a wide array of challenges including primary and secondary education, adult literacy, vocational training, health care, nutrition, child welfare, housing, and the environment. These programs have helped reduce Venezuela's poverty rate by over 30 percent, and continue to help ease longstanding social and economic tensions.

Vulnerable populations, in particular, are benefiting from many of the changes that are taking place in Venezuela. Several new government policies have focused on fostering gender equality, such as the Law on the Right of Women to a Violence-Free Life signed in 2007. Among other things, the law prohibits human trafficking and sexual exploitation. Venezuela's progress on this issue was recognized by the U.S. State Department in its Trafficking in Persons Report for 2008.

In March 2008, a Ministry for Women's Issues was created as a complement to the many economic and social programs that benefit women, such as the Women's Development Bank of Venezuela and social services in the areas of health, nutrition, family development, education, and employment training.

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### **BEYOND VENEZUELA**

Under the administration of President Chávez, Venezuela has taken the lead in strengthening cooperation on economic and security issues in Latin America and around the globe. Some examples are bilateral anti-terrorism pacts signed with Colombia, multilateral trade with Andean and Southern Cone countries, and energy accords for poor nations as well as low income communities in the U.S.

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The Venezuela Information Office is dedicated to informing the American public about contemporary Venezuela, and receives its funding from the government of Venezuela. Further information is available from the FARA office of the Department of Justice in Washington, DC.

Venezuela has prioritized the issue of energy security and extended a helping hand to nations that have struggled to secure access to the high priced commodity of oil. Cooperative energy agreements have been signed with several countries in Africa. To better reach out to this part of the world, Venezuela opened 18 new embassies in countries including Mali, Morocco, Congo, Angola, and Burkina Faso. In the Caribbean and Central America, the PetroCaribe program provides 18 member countries with oil at market prices made affordable through beneficial financing terms. This aid stimulates economic and social development.

In another bid to help the poor, Citgo, the subsidiary of Venezuela's state oil company, answered a call by U.S. Senators to donate heating oil to low-income families in northern states. Since 2005, the heating oil program has donated supplies valued at over \$150 million to nearly a quarter of a million families across 23 U.S. states. A new program to provide energy-efficient light bulbs begins this year.

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## **A VOICE FOR PEACE**

Venezuela has proven itself to be a worthy ally in the hemispheric search for true security and a strong voice for peace and international cooperation.

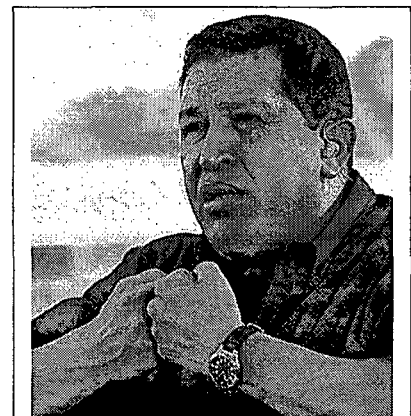
The country has maintained a well-defined policy of opposing terrorism in all its forms. In the last several years, Venezuela has signed 10 multilateral agreements and conventions to guarding against terrorism – eight under the United Nations framework, and two under the Organization of American States. Extensive bilateral and multilateral accords have also addressed the need to combat the international drug trade.

The foremost example of Venezuela's efforts to promote peace is the humanitarian mediation undertaken by President Chávez in Colombia. That effort, which began at the request of Colombian officials, was successful in freeing six civilian hostages held captive by the FARC guerrillas for years and returning them to their families.

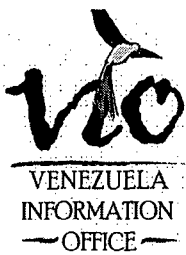
President Chávez has consistently called for a negotiated solution to the Colombia conflict. On January 13<sup>th</sup>, 2008, he publicly expressed his opposition to the armed struggle, and on June 8<sup>th</sup>, he asked the FARC to unilaterally release all hostages and put down their weapons.

When Colombia overstepped its borders to conduct a deadly air strike on a FARC camp in Ecuador on March 1<sup>st</sup>, Venezuela led the region in protest. All nations apart from Colombia and U.S. sided with Venezuela and Ecuador in their call to respect national sovereignty and condemn militarization.

In both domestic initiatives and abroad, Venezuela under President Chávez has become a leader in the fight against poverty and the movement to foster equality. In a globalized world, Venezuela offers a powerful example of how countries can combine a deep respect for sovereignty with the pursuit of common goals.



"I do not agree with the armed struggle, and that is one of the things that I want to talk to Marulanda [the now deceased head of the FARC] about." – President Hugo Chavez, 1/13/08



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## **VENEZUELA AND THE QUESTION OF TERRORISM**

Venezuela's record clearly shows that it is a country that neither tolerates nor supports terrorism. However, since 2006, the U.S. State Department has certified Venezuela as "not cooperating fully" with anti-terror efforts. Annual reports have re-certified the country as such, but a lack of evidence to support that designation would indicate that it reflects nothing more than the political aims of the current U.S. administration.

Additionally, in important ways, Venezuela's own efforts to combat terrorism have faced obstacles due to U.S. policy. Two examples are an embargo on sales of U.S. military equipment needed for policing and border patrol, and the failure of the U.S. to comply with extradition treaties that would allow Venezuela to prosecute known terrorists.

### **THE CONTEXT OF THE CURRENT CLAIMS**

Venezuela shares a 1,500-mile long border with Colombia, a country that has for several decades been the site of an armed conflict that has greatly impacted the Western Hemisphere. Since the late 1990s, the U.S. has played a role by providing training and funding to the Colombian armed forces in their increasingly militarized struggle against guerrilla groups. Venezuela has maintained strong relations with Colombia, and in 2007 was asked by government officials to negotiate a humanitarian hostage-for-prisoner swap.

Months later, Colombia's President Uribe abruptly curtailed that humanitarian process accused Venezuela of aiding the guerrillas. Laptops allegedly showing evidence of monetary contributions to the guerrillas was produced by the Colombian military. Officials say the laptops were acquired in a controversial attack on a FARC camp in Ecuador, a deadly invasion on March 1, 2008 that killed two dozen, including the rebel hostage negotiator. Many experts and observers have since questioned the veracity and origin of their contents.<sup>1</sup>

In fact, in an open letter to the U.S. media,<sup>2</sup> two dozen specialists on Latin American cited "significant problems of inconsistency" between the documents and the statements of Colombian officials, and concluded that the Colombian government "has substantially exaggerated their contents, perhaps for political purposes."<sup>3</sup> For its part, the Venezuelan government has reviewed and rejected the alleged evidence. President Chávez called the allegations "ridiculous," lamenting that "the government of Colombia is capable of provoking a war with Venezuela to justify a US intervention in Venezuela."<sup>4</sup>

However, in the U.S., the contents of the laptops have been strategically released to the press to build a case against Venezuela. INTERPOL'S forensic examination of the laptops (released May 15th) found no evidence that they had been altered after March 1st, but was

unable to determine their accuracy or source.<sup>5</sup> Media accounts have nonetheless taken the Colombian officials at their word, while assigning guilt to Venezuela despite a lack of proof.

### **A COUNTER-PRODUCTIVE POLICY FOR THE U.S.**

Based on the allegations by Colombia, Republican representatives in the U.S. Congress have proposed legislation hostile toward Venezuela, including a "state sponsor of terrorism" designation. House Resolution 1049 was put forth by Connie Mack (R-FL) and the right-wing Cuban-American Congressional Members of Florida on March 13, 2008.

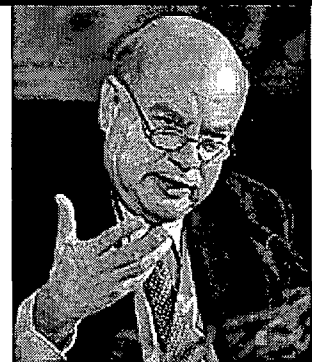
Despite their campaign to push the State Department to add Venezuela to its list of state sponsors of terrorism, the resolution has failed to win favor among lawmakers. A report by the Senate Foreign Relations Committee calls it "counterproductive," and "strongly cautions that policymakers must be wary of the implications of poorly thought-out sanctions which might isolate the United States."<sup>7</sup>

Similarly, analysts and experts on Latin America have pointed out the negative political consequences that the "state sponsor of terror" label would bring. Michael Shifter of the Inter-American Dialogue in Washington, DC commented that sanctioning Venezuela "would be self-defeating" for the U.S. He added that "it might give Chávez a boost... and it would risk a further jump in oil prices."<sup>8</sup> Adam Isacson of the Center for International Policy said, "There is not even consensus among the Republicans that it would be helpful. Also, having to get a special license for all Venezuelan oil sales to the U.S. would throw the fuel market in a bit of turmoil."<sup>9</sup>

Certainly, the economic repercussions that a "state sponsor of terror" designation for Venezuela would have are enormous. Venezuela is the second-largest trading partner of the U.S. in the hemisphere, and the twelfth-largest in the world. Bilateral trade between the countries has grown in recent years to exceed \$50 billion in 2007. American sales to Venezuela rose by 40 percent in 2006, and another 13 percent in 2007.<sup>10</sup>

Trade between Venezuela and other Latin American countries could also be threatened by U.S. sanctions. The economies of Colombia and Venezuela are particularly intertwined; bilateral trade totaled about \$6 billion in 2007.<sup>11</sup>

The Ambassador of Venezuela to the U.S., Bernardo Alvarez, has explained: "There will be very grave economic consequences if a politically driven measure like this is taken. Just think about the \$10.2 billion lost U.S. exports to Venezuela, 230,000 manufacturing jobs tied to exports and 1.58 million barrels of oil a day from Venezuela .... Any action like this would have economic and political consequences, not only for the U.S.-Venezuela relationship as a whole, but also within the region. This would be seen as an effort to breed instability in the region."



Secretary General of the Organization of American States, José Miguel Insulza, testified before Congress in early April of 2008 about the findings of a special mission to investigate the Colombia claims. He stated: "does Venezuela support terrorist groups? I don't think so. .... There is no evidence, and no member country, including this one [the U.S.] has offered the OAS such proof."<sup>6</sup>

## VENEZUELA'S WORK FOR PEACE

Venezuela has proven itself to be a worthy ally in the hemispheric search for true security and a strong voice for peace and international cooperation. Initiatives such as the humanitarian mediation to free hostages in Colombia have made Venezuela a voice for positive change in the region.

Not only has Venezuela stood up for peace and prosperity, it has also maintained a well-defined policy of opposing terrorism in all its forms. This fact should not surprise the international community, for Venezuela has signed ten multilateral agreements and conventions guarding against terrorism – eight under the United Nations framework, and two under the Organization of American States. One of them is the Inter-American Convention Against Terrorism, which the U.S. has hesitated to sign.<sup>12</sup>

The government of Venezuela has a no tolerance policy on terrorism, which it has demonstrated under the administration of President Hugo Chávez by detaining and prosecuting or extraditing offenders according to law. Meanwhile, the U.S. has presented obstacles to the country's counter-terror efforts by refusing sales of military equipment and failing to respect extradition requests. A case in point is that of Luis Posada Carriles, who is wanted in Venezuela for numerous acts of terrorism including the deadly bombing of an airliner that killed all 73 people aboard.<sup>13</sup> Three years have passed since Venezuela first requested the extradition of Posada Carriles, but U.S. officials remain unresponsive, instead allowing the man to live freely in the state of Florida.<sup>14</sup> This flagrant violation of international extradition treaties would appear to be contradictory with the goals of the U.S. war on terror.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> "Briefing: Doubt cast on Colombia's seizure," by Kelly Hearn, *Washington Times*, April 29, 2008.

<http://www.rethinkvenezuela.com/news/04-29-08wt.html>

<sup>2</sup> "Letter to the Media: Laptop does not prove Venezuela ties." <http://www.mediaaccuracy.org/node/56>

<sup>3</sup> "Briefing: Doubt cast on Colombia's seizure," Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> "Chavez says Colombia seeks war with Venezuela," AFP, May 12, 2008.

[http://afp.google.com/article/ALeqM5jiv8gWZRSsEUeXPIKiAvdC9pB\\_w](http://afp.google.com/article/ALeqM5jiv8gWZRSsEUeXPIKiAvdC9pB_w)

<sup>5</sup> Interpol media release, May 15, 2008.

<http://www.interpol.int/Public/ICPO/PressReleases/PR2008/PR200817.asp>

<sup>6</sup> "OAS Chief to US Congress: No Venezuela-Terrorist Link," AFP, April 10, 2008.

<http://www.rethinkvenezuela.com/news/04-10-08afp.html>

<sup>7</sup> "Don't sanction Venezuela, panel urges," by Pablo Bachelet, *Miami Herald*, April 29, 2008.

<http://www.miamiherald.com/news/americas/story/513277.html>

<sup>8</sup> "Documents indicate that Chavez helped Colombia rebels," by Frank Bajak, Associated Press, May 11, 2008.

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<sup>9</sup> "Colombia shows new rebel documents," by Frank Bajak, Associated Press, April 9, 2008.

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2008/05/09/AR2008050902543.html>

<sup>10</sup> U.S. Commercial Service. <http://www.buyusa.gov/venezuela/en/csnews.html>

<sup>11</sup> "Analysis: War Not Likely in S. America Crisis," by Chris Hawley, *USA Today*, Marcy 3, 2008.

[http://www.usatoday.com/news/world/2008-03-04-colombia-analysis\\_N.htm](http://www.usatoday.com/news/world/2008-03-04-colombia-analysis_N.htm)

<sup>12</sup> "Venezuela Ratifies Inter-American Convention on Terrorism," by Martin Sanchez, *Venezuelanalysis*, January 30, 2004. <http://www.venezuelanalysis.com/news/337>

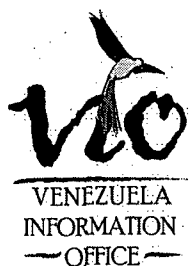
<sup>13</sup> "The terrorist we tolerate," by Rosa Brooks, *Los Angeles Times*, May 11, 2007.

<http://www.latimes.com/news/opinion/commentary/la-oe-brooks11may11.0.5521510.column>

<sup>14</sup> "Posada Carriles, a terror suspect abroad, enjoys a 'coming out' in Miami," by Carol Williams, *Los Angeles Times*, May 7, 2008. <http://www.latimes.com/news/nationworld/nation/la-na-posada7-2008may07.0.1699509.story>

<sup>15</sup> "A Terrorist Goes Free," by Bernardo Alvarez Herrera, *New York Times*, April 21, 2007.

<http://www.rethinkvenezuela.com/news/04-21-07nyt.html>



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## **A QUESTION OF RESPECT:**

### **President Chávez and Venezuela's Jewish Community**

The Jewish community in Venezuela is among the oldest in South America, dating back to the early 19th century. During the struggle for independence from Spain, Venezuelan hero Simón Bolívar found refuge among a group of Venezuelan Jews, some of whom later went on to fight in the ranks of his liberating army. Today, the majority of the country's Jewish citizens are descendants of European and North African immigrants who arrived during and after World War II.

Jewish people in Latin America have historically faced prejudice, but Venezuela has been a relative haven of religious tolerance in the region. Although Venezuela's Jewish community numbers only about 15-20,000 (less than 1 percent of the national population), it has long been a prized part of national social, political and economic life. Like many prominent Venezuelans, the current Foreign Minister Nicolas Maduro has Jewish heritage.<sup>1</sup>

Social inclusion has been a guiding principle for the administration of President Chávez, which has enacted new laws to favor equality among all people and worked tirelessly to end all forms of marginalization, whether they be religious, ethnic, economic, or otherwise.

#### **SOURCES OF CONTENTION**

Where then, do the allegations of anti-Semitism waged against the Chávez administration come from? One source that has been a subject of distortion is Venezuela's relationship with Iran and its President, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad. Some have accused President Chávez of sharing the views of the Iranian leader, however, the governments of Venezuela and Iran are ideologically very different. Though Venezuela shares strong diplomatic and trade ties with Iran, these are founded on the oil-producing activities of both countries, which were co-founders of OPEC in the 1960s.

On a few occasions, political events in Venezuela have caused concern among the Jewish community, and in particular, the American Jewish community. First, during the brief yet traumatic 2002 coup against President Chávez, police conducted a raid on a Jewish community center after having been informed that it may have been used by the coup plotters to store arms. In 2004, a car bombing caused a Jewish school to be searched. Neither of the two incidents were violent, though, nor did they produce any evidence of crimes. After a U.S.-based Jewish organization called the Weisenthal Center accused the Venezuelan state of anti-Semitism in 2006, the President of the Confederation of Jewish Associations of Venezuela disagreed.<sup>2</sup> He stated in a letter to the Center that "You have interfered in the political status, in the security, and in the well-being of our community. You have acted on your own, without consulting us, on issues that you don't know or understand."<sup>3</sup>

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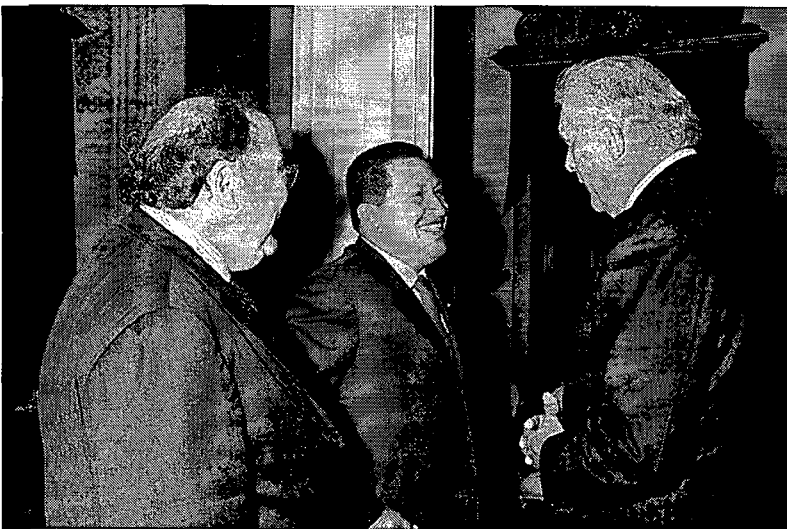
Also in 2006 decision by the Venezuelan government that same year to withdraw its Ambassador to Israel in protest of Israeli attacks on Palestine was another widely contested event, but, criticisms notwithstanding, the policy measure was no way motivated by anti-Semitism.

Finally, in the context of the U.S. War on Terror, some have made the empty claim that Hezbollah and other armed groups are allowed to operate in Venezuela. Because there is no proof that this is now or has ever been true, it can only be seen as an attempt to stir fear. This claim has also been categorically rejected by the Organization of American States. "There is no evidence, and no member country, including this one [the United States] has offered the OAS such proof,"<sup>4</sup> said Secretary General José Insulza in early 2008. The Venezuelan government takes the issue of security – both at home and in the region – very seriously, and condemns all forms of terrorism.

## **STEPS FORWARD**

On August 13, 2008, President Chávez hosted leaders from the Venezuelan Jewish community, the World Jewish Congress, and the Latin American Jewish Congress at the Miraflores Presidential Palace in Caracas.<sup>5</sup> The gathering was a meaningful and historic occasion that laid the groundwork for increased cooperation between Venezuelan officials and Jewish citizens.

Perhaps even more importantly, the meeting also served to bury the myth that the administration of President Chávez has had an anti-Semitic orientation, jettisoning false claims that the Venezuelan leader held any religious bias. Attacks on the character and policies of the President occur frequently in Venezuela's contested political scene. However, the false rumors of anti-Semitism have been among the most damaging and divisive of them. The meeting clarified a key point: President Chávez wants the Jewish community in Venezuela and abroad to be treated with the respect and tolerance that they deserve.



*Above, President Chávez meets with Jewish leaders in Caracas.*

### **JEWISH LEADERS REACT TO THE MEETING WITH PRESIDENT CHÁVEZ:**

"There may be some differences of opinion on some issues on major issues such as Iran and also the Middle East. But when it comes to anti-Semitism, I think we're on the same page."

*-- Michael Schneider,  
Secretary General of the  
World Jewish Congress*

"The Jewish community is more at ease now with President Hugo Chávez, who demonstrated he is a great friend of the Jewish community and who wants to fight anti-Semitism in Latin America."

*--Jack Terpins, President of  
the Latin American Jewish  
Congress*



## NEW GROUNDS FOR COOPERATION

The August 13<sup>th</sup> meeting between President Chávez and Jewish leaders produced some concrete results that will help to brighten the future of the Jewish community in Venezuela. First, President Chávez is considering the reopening of a diplomatic office for Venezuela in Israel. Second, he agreed to join with other Latin American presidents (for example, Argentina and Brazil) in condemning "all forms of anti-Semitism, discrimination against minorities, and anti-Muslim sentiment."<sup>6</sup>

Most importantly, a direct dialogue has now been opened up between the Venezuelan government and the Jewish community. The unfounded claims of an anti-Jewish bias in the Chávez administration was indeed very damaging for all sides involved. However, the progress that has been made in correcting that grave distortion has helped the connection between Venezuela's government and its Jewish citizenry to grow into a much stronger and more positive one.

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<sup>1</sup> "Por un pedido argentino, Chávez recibió en Caracas a líderes judíos," Nestor Restivo, *Clarín*, August 14, 2008. <http://www.clarin.com/diario/2008/08/14/elmundo/i-01737125.htm>

<sup>2</sup> "Misquoting Chávez to Make Him Anti-Semitic," FAIR, March 15, 2006. <http://www.commondreams.org/views06/0315-28.htm>

<sup>3</sup> "Venezuela's Jews Defend Leftist President in Flap Over Remarks," Mark Perelman, Asociación Israelita de Venezuela, January 13, 2006. <http://www.embavenez-us.org/news.php?nid=2227>

<sup>4</sup> "OAS Chief to US Congress: No Venezuela-terrorist link," AFP, April 10, 2008. <http://afp.google.com/article/ALeqM5ipNXwHOq34tlujMgpPj9OZVXwzwnw>

<sup>5</sup> "El presidente Chávez se reunion con el Congreso Judío Mundial," Congreso Judío Latinoamericano. <http://www.congresojudio.org.ar/nota.php?np=331>

<sup>6</sup> "Jewish Leaders seek improved ties with Chávez," Rachel Jones, AP, August 13, 2008. <http://ap.google.com/article/ALeqM5jvkbVe9mCz6Gty90wukF0wXBKqAAD92HQ1GG0>

## **VENEZUELA AND THE ENVIRONMENT**

### **CAN AN OIL COUNTRY 'GO GREEN'?**

Venezuela is best known for being a major oil producer – the world's fifth-largest, and with reserves of crude larger than those of any other nation outside the Middle East. Few are aware, though, that it also boasts a level of biodiversity that is unmatched in most other parts of the world.

Venezuela, a country of 26 million people that is about twice the size of California, ranks 10th on the global stage for its level of biodiversity. This fact would suggest that the environment ought to form a vital part of the national agenda. However, until Venezuela's President Hugo Chávez was elected in 1998, no Venezuelan head of state had ever addressed the issue.



Shortly after President Chávez entered the executive office, Venezuela developed a new constitution which includes the country's very first environmental protection policies. In an entire chapter of the 1999 Constitution dedicated to the environment, sustainable development is established as a national mandate. The goal was to create a model of sustainable development based on the principle that natural resources are essential for development, and must be used in a rational way that maintains the ecological equilibrium.

The 1999 Constitution of Venezuela also recognizes that fostering a healthy and protected environment is an essential part of eliminating poverty and raising the standard of living. For this reason, the right of citizens to a clean environment is given the same inalienable status in the constitutional framework as are the right to life, health and education. The constitution also stipulates that environmental protections must be developed in cooperation with local communities and civic groups. In addition, new laws in Venezuela require environmental education at all levels of schooling.

Now, for the first time, Venezuela is investing in and implementing environmentally-friendly models of growth. The state-owned oil company PDVSA has begun recuperating green areas, reducing emissions, and cleaning up rivers and lakes. A clear sign of progress came in 2007, when President Chávez proudly announced: "You should all know that... [in] the gasoline produced in Venezuela... we don't use lead anymore."<sup>1</sup>

Also in 2007, the President banned the opening of new coal mines in the state of Zulia, and expansions of the Guasare and Paso Diablo mines were rejected.<sup>2</sup> Other mining projects threatening to disrupt Indigenous communities or local ecosystems have been sidelined by the Ministry of Popular Power for the Environment. Among them is one of the largest deposits of gold

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in Latin America, called the Las Cristinas gold mine, which was exploited for many years by a Canadian corporation and is located in the Imataca Forest (a national reserve since 1963).<sup>3</sup>

In addition to these domestic efforts, Venezuela has also signed 14 international conventions on environmental protection and sustainable development while taking steps to protect and preserve the country's natural resource wealth. In 2004, Venezuela ratified the Kyoto Protocol on reducing greenhouse gas emissions, and supported special measures applying to developing countries.

## **THE GREEN REVOLUTION**

Though in the past it was not always respected, protected land in Venezuela accounts for over 60% of the national territory. With 43 national parks and 36 natural monuments, Venezuela has a greater proportion of protected lands than any other country in Latin America. This is for good reason, as there is an enormous amount of biodiversity to preserve: about half of national lands are covered by forests and jungles. Venezuela is home about 20,000 species of plants and 5,711 types of animals, including birds, reptiles, mammals, amphibians, and fish.

These very high levels of biodiversity make environmental protection a critical issue. Due to changes in the last decade, environmental policy in Venezuela is now crafted through increased consultation with local communities who help identify environmental challenges and indicate the best use of local natural resources. New mechanisms for citizen participation have emerged, such as Water and Energy Committees, Conservation Committees, and farming cooperatives.

### ***Misión Arbol* (Tree Mission)**

One of the most noteworthy and productive efforts so far, *Misión Arbol*, is combating deforestation by protecting river basins and promoting the sustainable use of Venezuela's forests with local communities.

Nearly 2,000 tree-planting projects have been completed by citizens who have organized themselves into Conservation Committees. According to *Misión Arbol* statistics, 2,330 of these committees have been established nationwide, resulting in the planting of 33 million forest and fruit plants. In 2006 and 2007 alone, 13,524 hectares of land were reforested.



### ***Misión Energía* (Energy Mission)**

Most of Venezuela's population is concentrated in the many cities that dot the northern coastal area of the country, while the interior is taken up by vast, grassy plains and thick jungles. The cities use most of the energy and generate the bulk of pollution. Nonetheless, Venezuela's "energy revolution" is touching all parts of the country, not just urban areas.<sup>4</sup>

New programs creating eco-friendly housing using building materials derived from waste generated during oil production have plans to build 60,000 "*petrocasas*." The first such community was inaugurated in the state of Carabobo on March 30, 2008. Initiatives like the "*petrocasas*" bring economic development to low-income areas while avoiding taking a high toll on the environment.

Though over 70% of Venezuela's electricity comes from hydroelectric plants that produce very little pollution, efforts are being made to reduce the country's carbon output. To that end, Venezuela is

replacing all incandescent light bulbs with energy-saving bulbs that last longer. The program *Misión Energía* aims to replace 52 million bulbs during its first phase.

President Chávez has also announced plans for a windmill farm to generate electricity on the Caribbean coast, and is exploring more uses for cleaner-burning natural gas and ways to reduce the need for oil-fired power plants.<sup>5</sup>

### **Clean and Potable Water**

Rivers, lakes, and beaches are being cleaned up throughout Venezuela. In many places, this has required the construction of new sewage treatment plants. Among the most ambitious projects is the restoration of the Guaire River, which flows through Caracas and was severely contaminated by being used for sewage disposal. The restoration of the Guaire will extend over about a decade, and includes the reforestation of shorelines, relocation of housing settlements, installation of sewage collectors, and construction of treatment plants along the tributaries of the river.



Access to clean drinking water is an important related issue. In past decades, many Venezuelans lacked sufficient access to potable water. However, this problem is being addressed through the recent construction of aqueducts, dams, pipes, and reservoirs. In 2006, two aqueducts were built, 65 miles of pipes were laid to connect water storage areas, and 44 reservoirs were repaired.

One of the UN Millennium Development Goals is to halve the amount of people in each country that lack sustainable access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation. On this goal, the UN has deemed Venezuela to be "on the right track." On the whole, Venezuela is evaluated as "Very likely to achieve" the UN's overarching mandate of creating environmental sustainability by 2015.<sup>6</sup>

### **CONCLUSION**

Although in the past Venezuela's environmental policy was hampered by the dominant role of oil production in the economy, government attitudes on the issue have recently become clarified.

In fact, they have taken a marked turn. Adherence to international standards and efforts to reduce energy consumption, lessen pollution, and combat deforestation indicate an increased respect for the environment on the part of the Chávez administration. President Chávez made this position clear by saying: "Venezuela is one of the countries that least contaminates the environment, but nevertheless we want to give an example and be at the vanguard."<sup>7</sup>

<sup>1</sup> "Venezuela's Green Agenda," by Eva Golinger, Venezuelanalysis, February 27, 2007.  
<http://www.venezuelanalysis.com/analysis/2244>

<sup>2</sup> "The Venezuelan Minister of the Environment prohibits the opening of new coal mines in the state of Zulia," Environmental Collectives, March 21, 2007.

<sup>3</sup> "Venezuela Blocks Crystallex, Gold Reserve Mines," By Stewart Bailey, Bloomberg, April 30, 2008.  
<http://www.bloomberg.com/apps/news?pid=newsarchive&sid=a2mT9ljAlpyY>

<sup>4</sup> "Chavez Announces \$3 Billion for Venezuela's 'Energy Revolution,'" By Chris Carlson, Venezuelanalysis, March 31, 2008. <http://www.venezuelanalysis.com/news/3310>

<sup>5</sup> "Chavez Takes Up Energy Conservation," by Ian James, Associated Press, February 4, 2007.  
<sup>6</sup> United Nations Development Programme. MDG Monitor, 2007.

[http://www.mdgmonitor.org/country\\_progress.cfm?c=VEN&cd=862](http://www.mdgmonitor.org/country_progress.cfm?c=VEN&cd=862)

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

## REVOLUTIONIZING WOMEN'S ROLES IN VENEZUELA

Since 1999, the government of President Hugo Chávez has established key legal and institutional guarantees for women's rights in Venezuela. These new measures are placing Venezuela at the vanguard of global struggles to promote gender equality.

Perhaps even more importantly, the active participation of women in political and economic processes has been prioritized as a key part of the broader movement for social justice that is Venezuela's Bolivarian Revolution.

Though this transformation is still incomplete, it has already made impressive strides. An example of the commitment to gender equality at the official level was the creation of a new Ministry for Women's Issues on March 8<sup>th</sup>, 2008. Meanwhile, in their daily lives, Venezuelan women particularly in low-income communities are increasingly empowered through state-funded initiatives in micro-lending, food provision, and nutrition, as well as programs in daycare, health, education, and other areas.

**"as head of state... I  
will always support  
women's movements,  
to seek balance in  
Venezuela and thus  
contribute to the  
balance in the world."**

-- Hugo Chávez, speaking in  
New York City in 2006

### LEGAL STRIDES FOR WOMEN'S RIGHTS

The 1999 Constitution of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela is the product of a Constituent Assembly which allowed diverse sectors of society to participate in the drafting of new laws, including women and other minority groups.

Nora Castañeda, now the President of the Women's Bank of Venezuela (*Banmujer*), recalls: "We were invited to submit proposals and we did. The women's movement and the Indigenous movement picketed every day for four months while the Constitutional Assembly was sitting, and we got what we wanted. The members of the Assembly, women and men, recognized the historic importance of our struggle."<sup>1</sup>



Because of the participation of women's rights advocates in the development of the 1999 Constitution, the charter is now among the most progressive in the Western Hemisphere on gender issues. Significantly, it was composed with the use of non-sexist language so as not to make assumptions when referring to the gender of citizens or holders of political office – i.e. instead of “he,” and “his,” it reads “he or she” and “his and her.”

Venezuela's 1999 Constitution states that all persons are entitled to full citizenship rights and prohibits gender discrimination. In terms of economic rights, the Constitution guarantees full equality between men and women in employment, and is unique among Latin American legal codes in recognizing housework as an economically productive activity for which housewives are owed social security benefits. In doing so, the law demonstrates a powerful recognition of the historical debt owed to women by society.<sup>2</sup>

Several other pieces of federal legislation were designed to protect women. The 1999 Law on Violence Against Women and Families addresses issues of sexual harassment and domestic violence. The 2000 Law for the Protection of Children is also relevant in this regard. Additionally, under the 2001 Law on Land and Agricultural Development, women were made more able to support their families through provisions allowing them to qualify as heads of household, spearhead agricultural projects, and hold preferential property rights. President Chávez also opened all branches of the armed forces to women, removing legal limits to a woman's ability to develop a career in the military in Venezuela.

## WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN POLITICS



In a particularly dramatic transformation of Venezuela's political demography, 4 out of 5 branches of government are now headed by women – in fact, all but the executive office: women hold the top posts in the National Assembly, Supreme Court, National Electoral Council, and the Human Rights Office. The head of the Venezuelan National Assembly, Cilia Flores, is pictured at left with President Chávez.

On the whole, Women's participation in government in Venezuela has increased significantly in recent years. A new study by International IDEA finds that 18.6% of seats in Venezuela's National Assembly are held by women, giving that country the 8<sup>th</sup> highest level of women's participation in congress in Latin America, just above the regional average and surpassing many nations including Chile, Brazil, and Colombia. Back in 1997, before President Chávez was elected, only 5.9% of Venezuela's members of congress were women, the 3<sup>rd</sup> lowest rate in the region. This means that the rate of women in congress in Venezuela has more than tripled in the last decade.<sup>3</sup> In local government, the numbers also illustrate definite shifts, but indicate that more progress is needed. Women account for 8.3% of all governors in Venezuela – the 3<sup>rd</sup>-highest rate in the region.

## The 1999 Constitution of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela



**Article 21:** All persons are equal before the law, and consequently: No discrimination based on race, sex, creed or social standing shall be permitted.

**Article 76:** The State guarantees overall assistance and protection for motherhood, in general, from the moment of conception, throughout pregnancy, delivery and the puerperal period, and guarantees full family planning services based on ethical and scientific values.

**Article 88:** The state guarantees the equality and equitable treatment of men and women in the exercise of the right to work. The state recognizes work at home as an economic activity that creates added value and produces social welfare and health. Housewives are entitled to Social Security in accordance with the law.

## WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT IN LOCAL POLITICS

One reason for optimism is that local-level politics in Venezuela are being transformed by new forms of participation such as communal councils, and women are quickly assuming positions of leadership in that process.

The system of communal councils was set up in 2001 to channel popular participation by citizens in local and national political life. These groups give communities the opportunity to identify and address local needs through the model of "popular power," which is considered the 5<sup>th</sup> motor of the Bolivarian Process in Venezuela and is guided by the constitutional Law of Popular Participation. As of August 2007, some 25,000 Communal Councils existed, and total membership was around 2.2 million.



Studies of the communal councils are still in their infancy. However, a recent study of low-income communities in Venezuela by U.S. Sociologist Sujatha Fernandes concluded that: "barrio women in Chávez's Venezuela... have sought to take the initiative at the local level to make decisions regarding their community and the implementation of local programs. ... these women are agents who are building new spaces of democratic community participation."<sup>4</sup>

## BANMUJER: CREATING A 'CARING ECONOMY'

In addition to making strides in local and national politics, women in Venezuela are also quickly achieving unprecedented levels of economic empowerment under the administration of President Chávez. The 1999 Constitution set out important legal measures, including a provision that makes women who work at home eligible for social security benefits. Institutions supporting women's full participation in the economy have also been key to this process; for example, *Banmujer*, the Women's Development Bank of Venezuela.

The only national financial institution of its kind in the world, *Banmujer* gives small, low-interest loans to women in order to help them form business ventures. The chief goals of the bank are to create employment and reduce poverty among women, and to encourage women's participation in the economic and social transformations that are taking place as part of Venezuela's Bolivarian Revolution. *Banmujer* was established in honor of International Women's Day on March 8, 2001, and disbursed its first micro-credit loans in September of 2001. On the fifth anniversary of that first loan, President Chavez announced another investment in *Banmujer* of about \$65 million U.S. dollars.<sup>5</sup> As of late 2007, nearly 2 million women had benefited from the bank's loans as well as its training programs and counseling services.

Nora Castañeda, President of *Banmujer*, said in an interview with the *Guardian*: "We are creating an economy at the service of human beings instead of human beings at the service of the economy."<sup>6</sup> She has toured the U.S. and Europe to describe the Venezuelan success story. The bank's achievements are explained in part by the fact that it was designed in consultation with poor Venezuelans in both rural and urban areas, and specifically tailored to meet their needs.

Castañeda explained: "Since 70 per cent of Venezuelans living in poverty are women, we decided to target them. *Banmujer* tries to create a level playing field by empowering these women not just economically, but also politically and



socially. It's a social development bank that assesses the viability of projects, and provides training in citizenship, organization, leadership, education, health and self-esteem as well as personal development. We are not building a bank – we are building a different way of life.”<sup>7</sup>

## **“MOTHERS OF THE BARRIO”: SOCIAL MISSIONS IN VENEZUELA**

The economic and social needs of women are also being met by a set of development programs called “social missions” that began operating in 2003 using revenues from Venezuela’s state-owned oil company, PDVSA. There are now over 2 dozen social missions operating on a national scale, including a nutrition and food distribution program, another that sponsors adult literacy and education, and a third and very successful campaign to provide universal healthcare through a network of free clinics primarily in economically depressed areas. Because poverty in Venezuela affects women the most, the social programs are having their greatest impact among women and female-headed households. They have helped to raise the standard of living significantly, contributing to a 27.6% drop in poverty rates in Venezuela since the missions began in 2003.<sup>8</sup>

One of the newest social missions, the “Mothers of the Barrio” Mission, was launched in March of 2006 to provide a monthly stipend to poor women with children who lack full-time employment. This is also based on Article 88 of the Constitution recognizing women’s work in the home as an economically productive activity. By August of 2006, “Mothers of the Barrio” was providing some 200,000 women with stipends averaging around \$176 per month, or 60-80% of the current minimum wage. The funds are allotted according to need, and rotate so that more beneficiaries may be covered.<sup>9</sup>

## **REVOLUTIONIZING WOMEN’S ROLES**

For women in Venezuela, the first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century has already brought many long-awaited advancements in the areas of law, politics, and the economy. At a local level as well as an administrative one, women’s roles are truly undergoing a profound transformation.

This transformation is, of course, an ongoing one. What has become clear thus far is that, under President Chávez, the government of Venezuela has become dedicated to helping women assume and sustain active roles in the process of their own empowerment, and that the peaceful and democratic Bolivarian Revolution will not – and cannot – exclude or proceed without them.

<sup>1</sup> “The Revolution has a Woman’s Face,” by Global Women’s Strike, *The Venezuela Reader: The Building of a People’s Democracy*, Olivia Burlingame Gombri, ed., Washington, DC: Epica, 2005.

<sup>2</sup> “Women and Venezuela’s Bolivarian Revolution,” by Sarah Wagner, *Venezuelananalysis*, January 15, 2005. <http://www.venezuelananalysis.com/analysis/877>

<sup>3</sup> “30 Years of Democracy: Riding the Wave? Women’s Political Participation in Latin America,” International IDEA, February 29, 2008. [http://www.idea.int/publications/30\\_years\\_of\\_democracy/index.cfm](http://www.idea.int/publications/30_years_of_democracy/index.cfm)

<sup>4</sup> “Barrio Women and Popular Politics in Chávez’s Venezuela,” by Sujatha Fernandes, *Latin American Politics and Society*, Fall 2007 [http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi\\_qa4000/is\\_200710/ai\\_n21033374](http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_qa4000/is_200710/ai_n21033374)

<sup>5</sup> “Celebrating Five Years of the Women’s Bank,” By Coral Wynter and Jim McIlroy, *Green Left Weekly* #686, Oct. 11, 2006. <http://www.greenleft.org.au/2006/686/35614>

<sup>6</sup> “The bank that likes to say yes – if you’re a woman,” by Diane Taylor, *Guardian*, March 24, 2005. <http://www.guardian.co.uk/money/2005/mar/24/accounts.venezuela>

<sup>7</sup> “Interview with Nora Castañeda from the Venezuelan Women’s Development Bank,” *New Internationalist* #381, August 2005. [http://www.newint.org/columns/makingwaves/2005/08/01/nora\\_castaneda/](http://www.newint.org/columns/makingwaves/2005/08/01/nora_castaneda/)

<sup>8</sup> “Update: The Venezuelan Economy in the Chavez Years,” Center for Economic and Policy Research, February 2008. <http://www.rethinkvenezuela.com/downloads/cepr%20report.htm>

<sup>9</sup> Gregory Wilpert, *Changing Venezuela by Taking Power: The History and Policies of the Chávez Government*, NY: Verso, 2008.



## **Part II: Press Releases**



VENEZUELA INFORMATION OFFICE  
2000 P STREET NW SUITE 240  
WASHINGTON, DC 20036  
VOICE: (202) 347-8081  
FAX: (202) 223-8029

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
March 5, 2008

Contact: Megan Morrissey  
202-347-8081 x602  
[media@veninfo.org](mailto:media@veninfo.org)

## VENEZUELA EXPERTS AVAILABLE TO COMMENT ON ANDEAN CONFLICT

News coverage of events following Colombia's military incursion into Ecuador on March 2nd has focused largely on the reactions of Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez, while ignoring the role of Colombia and overlooking key context surrounding the events unfolding in the region. The Directors of the Venezuela Information Office in Washington, DC are available to provide updates on the situation and offer informed commentary.

Olivia Goubri, Executive Director of the Venezuela Information Office, said: "Statements made by a head of state certainly do not constitute truth just because they are made. Before portraying alleged links of a nefarious nature between Chavez and the FARC, proof must be established which up until now has been lacking. To forge a peaceful solution, the territorial violation of Ecuador by Colombia must also be looked at."

Tensions between Venezuela and Colombia flared this week when Uribe announced plans to bring Chavez before the International Criminal Court on charges of supporting "genocide." The move by Uribe made headlines, but news coverage failed to accurately depict realities in Colombia and the region in the last few decades. In particular, humanitarian talks by Venezuela that recently led to hostage releases in Colombia have been downplayed, though Colombia's actions which resulted in the death of a top FARC negotiator may have been aimed at preventing future peace agreements.

Executive Director Olivia Goubri and Associate Director Natali Fani are available for interviews and can speak about the significance of the most recent developments as they unfold. They have recently appeared as commentators on the BBC, CNN and NPR.

###

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
**May 6, 2008**

**CONTACT: MEGAN MORRISSEY**  
**(202)-365-6900**  
**media@veninfo.org**

## **Venezuelan Music Ensemble Visiting Bay Area on U.S. Tour**

*Los Vasallos del Sol*, the Venezuelan musical sensation never before seen in the United States, is featured at this year's Yerba Buena Gardens Festival in San Francisco on Saturday, May 10th. The 28-member ensemble interprets diverse music and dance traditions that portray Venezuelan heritage, from the African-inspired rhythms of the Caribbean to the folk ballads of the inland plains. The group has recorded five albums, most recently their 15-year anniversary disc, *Quince años* (2005).



This first U.S. tour for *Los Vasallos del Sol* is presented by the Embassy of Venezuela and sponsored by Citgo Corporation in collaboration with the Fundación Bigott, a private foundation committed to supporting Venezuelan popular culture. This tour exemplifies Venezuela's new vision of cultural inclusiveness and promotion of cultural diversity. It includes a performance at the Smithsonian Institute in Washington, DC.

Members of *Los Vasallos del Sol* and the Cultural Attaché of the Embassy of Venezuela in Washington, DC will participate in public forums on Venezuela and will be available for interviews beginning on Thursday, May 9th. The concert will be held on Saturday the 10th from 1-3pm at the Esplanade, 760 Howard Street.

To schedule an interview with any of the following, please contact Megan Morrissey at 202-365-6900.

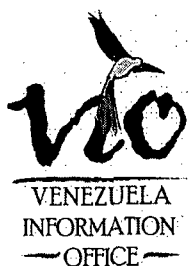
### **AVAILABLE FOR INTERVIEWS:**

**Patricia Abdelnour** - Cultural Attaché, Embassy of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela

**Jesús Rondón** - Founder and Musical Director, *Los Vasallos del Sol*

**Adriana Manrique** - Director of Cultural Promotion, Fundación Bigott

###



**Venezuela Information Office**  
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Washington, DC 20036  
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[www.veninfo.org](http://www.veninfo.org)

**For Immediate Release**  
**August 13, 2008**

**Contact: Olivia Goumbri**  
**301-613-4767**  
**[olivia@veninfo.org](mailto:olivia@veninfo.org)**

## **Venezuela Information Office Denounces Inaccurate ICG Report on Chavez Administration**

The Venezuela Information Office calls for the recognition of several grave inaccuracies and distortions present in a report on the administration of President Chavez released by the International Crisis Group (ICG) on July 23, 2008.

The report, entitled "Venezuela: Political Reform or Regime Demise?" misrepresents the current state of political affairs in that country by suggesting that it is not a stable democracy. Under President Chavez, though, Venezuela has a proven record of regular, free and fair elections and high voter participation. State policies over the last decade have been effective in reducing poverty, strengthening democratic institutions, and fostering an open political debate in civil society.

A trusted authority on conflict prevention and resolution, the ICG sadly shows an irresponsible tendency to disregard objectivity and fact in its analysis of Venezuela. The Venezuela Information Office has issued a detailed review of the ICG report that serves to correct errors and provide the missing context.

To read a full evaluation of the ICG report, [click here](#).

###

## **Part III: Articles**

# Los Angeles Times

<http://www.latimes.com/news/opinion/letters/la-le-letters31-2008aug31,0,7195398,full.story>  
From the Los Angeles Times

## Letters

### Letters to the editor

August 31, 2008

#### Are gays wrong about the right?

Re "The right to be a gay Republican," *Opinion*, Aug. 26

James Kirchick wonders why many gays are intolerant of Republicans in our midst. Whatever happened to diversity?

Maybe it's the way the Republican Party demonized gay people in the 2004 election to garner votes. Homo-hatred was a main platform of the Republicans, and remains so among those who want constitutional amendments against same-sex marriage here in California and other states.

We gays have every right to call people like Jonathan Crutchley traitors.

Barry Wendell

West Hollywood

I wholeheartedly agree that gays need to practice what they preach when it comes to tolerance. Diversity of opinion enriches any community.

But most gay Republicans I've met vote as they do because they've decided their bank account is more important to them than their own human rights or the welfare of society in general.

That priority may merit tolerance, but voting your wallet over your humanity is a costly trade-off.

Reid Olson

Los Angeles

Gay Republicans such as Crutchley and me are making difficult choices about who we should support in November. Although John McCain and the Republican Party establishment may be openly hostile to gay-equality issues and do not want to be near us, gay Republicans support the party because of the majority of its positions on the issues.

If the Republican Party wants to be part of the future, it needs to understand that gay and lesbian voters are part of the fabric of American life. We would like to change the party from the inside. Competition in the marketplace of political ideas helps keep equality alive.

Matt Munson

Ontario

#### The impact of a president

Re "The next president will disappoint you," *Opinion*, Aug. 24

Andrew J. Bacevich is fundamentally wrong. If the last eight years have proved anything, it is that a single administration's misguided policies can have enormous consequences for the country and for the world in a relatively short time.

Nobody expects the next president to single-handedly fix every problem we face, but addressing those problems with sincerity, rationality and honesty will be a huge improvement over the current administration.

Alan Disler

Los Angeles

Bacevich is half-right. Barack Obama, if elected president, may very well disappoint me. John McCain will not.

Obama promises a better America, a better world. Considering the scope of the challenges that await him, he may very well fail -- and disappoint me.

On the other hand, the goals of McCain are relatively easy: a continuation of the policies of the Bush years -- endless war (bomb, bomb, bomb) and favoring the rich and powerful at the expense of the middle class (home, home, home). If McCain is elected, I am convinced that he will not disappoint his voters.

Personally, I'll risk disappointment.

Ronald Rubin

*Topanga*

**Losing business?**

*Re "Paying fair," editorial, Aug. 26*

Assembly Bill 437 does far more than "simply make clear that the Ledbetter reasoning is the wrong model for interpreting state labor law." It essentially eliminates the statute of limitations for discrimination suits, thereby clogging the system with decades-old lawsuits with unspecified damages.

California's businesses already face enough litigation threats. Our state routinely has the "honor" of being voted among the worst business climates in the country. I have to believe frivolous lawsuits are a major factor.

Rather than pass laws that would entice businesses to relocate to or expand in California, our legislators customarily introduce and pass bills such as AB 437, which only invite more abuse of California's employment laws. At the same time, our elected officials further pander to the trial-lawyer lobby by killing common-sense legal reforms in committee year after year.

The Times' editorial was spot on when it said, "Willful discrimination does not create a terrific business climate." However, neither does an overly litigious state.

Robert M. Brower

*Irvine*

**'Empty lies' about Venezuela**

*Re "Fears of a Hezbollah presence in Venezuela," Aug. 27*

The Times made the very serious allegation that Venezuela would support terrorism, but tellingly lacked evidence to back up the claim. The Times used vague quotes from just one anonymous "Western anti-terrorism official" to claim that Venezuela is harboring militants. The argument is false, though, and simply mimics the politicized and unproved allegations against Venezuela by U.S. government agencies under President Bush.

Venezuela's democratic government does not support terrorism. The Times should leave these empty lies alone and focus on what we do know for sure: Caracas officials care about achieving peace and security in the hemisphere and protecting groups that face threats. After President Hugo Chavez met with Jewish leaders on Aug. 13, the head of the Latin American Jewish Congress stated that the Venezuelan leader "demonstrated that he is a great friend of the [Jewish] community, that he knows and wants to fight anti-Semitism in Latin America."

Megan Morrissey

*Venezuela Information*

*Office*

*Washington*

**Leaving Iraq**

*Re "Iraqi prime minister demands a firm U.S. withdrawal date," Aug. 26*

Now that the Iraqis have demanded that all U.S. troops be withdrawn by the end of 2011, the true intentions of Americans will be revealed.

Will we respect the full sovereignty of Iraq? Or will we continue to impose an occupation on that country? Washington's insistence that any

withdrawal be tied to "conditions on the ground" is simply a cover for our imperialistic designs on that country's single most important resource -- oil. It is an attempt to delay our withdrawal until the American presence becomes an unalterable and accepted fact of life on the ground. But this is a delusion that can only lead to endless conflict for the people of Iraq.

If we claim to respect freedom, self-determination and the sovereignty of other nations, now is the time to show it by our actions.

Chris Apostal

Silver Lake

Cow question

Re "Tip them over and they still point north," Aug. 26

I have another theory to ponder: Did the scientists ever consider that the cows may lie down facing north because they don't want the sun in their eyes? If they did the study below the equator, would the cows be facing south?

Allen Hatch

Los Angeles

If you want other stories on this topic, search the Archives at [latimes.com/archives](http://latimes.com/archives).

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## Morrissey: Venezuela pushes for peace

GHS

Posted Jun 27, 2008 @ 12:58 AM

The letter "Turnaround in Venezuela" (June 11) got President Chavez all wrong. His recent call for Colombia's FARC to abandon guerrilla warfare caught world attention. However, was not the first time he spoke out against the armed conflict.

Chavez said on Jan. 13th: "I do not agree with the armed struggle, and that is one of the things that I want to talk to (now deceased FARC leader) Marulanda about." Before that, he was asked by the Colombian officials to broker a hostage release with the FARC. That effort returned six civilians to their families.

More importantly, the claim that Venezuela "supported" the FARC does not hold up to scrutiny. Interpol found that the files Colombia offered as evidence were unchanged between March 1-10, but did not determine their source or authenticity. Venezuela has been adversely affected by the war in Colombia, but has acted as an advocate for peace.

MEGAN MORRISSEY,

Venezuela Information Office

Washington

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**boston.com**

THIS STORY HAS BEEN FORMATTED FOR EASY PRINTING

## Chavez's peace push to Colombian guerrillas is not new The Boston Globe

June 24, 2008

REGARDING THE June 14 editorial "Chavez pitches a change-up": The Venezuelan leader has often advocated peace, calling for an end to the armed conflict in Colombia. His recent appeal to the FARC to stop fighting was not new. On Jan. 13, for example, President Chavez said in a televised address: "I do not agree with the armed struggle, and that is one of the things that I want to talk to [the late FARC leader Manuel] Marulanda about."

Chavez has also offered to assist with a much-needed peace process. In January and February, he brokered the humanitarian release of six hostages held by the FARC. Those hostages, all civilians and former politicians, were returned to their families after years of captivity.

In addition to the humanitarian effort in Colombia, Venezuela has led regional initiatives on food security, energy security, military cooperation, and anti-poverty programs. Venezuela does not threaten the region, but rather, is moving it forward toward a lasting peace.

MEGAN MORRISSEY, *Venezuela Information Office, Washington* ■

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## Chavez has always been for peace

June 19, 2008 12:15 am

Chávez has always been for peace

This is in response to the June 13 editorial titled "The Chávez shift," which suggested the Venezuelan leader is taking "nice" pills.

His calls for peace are not new. Chávez said publicly last January: "I do not agree with the armed struggle." He advocates a political solution to a conflict that runs deep in Colombia and has sometimes wrought violence in Venezuela.

Readers may remember that Chávez negotiated the release of six hostages held by the FARC in the early part of this year. Those half-dozen captives, all civilians and most of them former politicians, were returned to their families after years in the jungle.

The Free Lance-Star was right to note Venezuela's "democratic resilience." This was seen in April 2002, when citizens demanded the reversal of a coup against the elected government of President Chávez.

Also in free and fair elections in December 2006, when Chávez was again elected with a mandate to lift Venezuelans out of poverty.

His charity programs have even benefited low-income families in the U.S., where 23 states receive subsidized home heating oil in the winter.

It would seem that the Venezuelan leader has been taking "nice" pills for years.

Megan Morrissey

Washington

The writer is a media analyst with the Venezuela Information Office.

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www.chicagotribune.com/news/opinion/letters/chi-vp0617lettersbriefs2jun17,0,4518944.story

## chicagotribune.com

### Venezuelan leader

June 17, 2008

Had the Tribune followed Venezuela more closely, the June 10 editorial "The surprising Mr. Chavez" would likely not have been written. The Venezuelan leader's recent appeal to Colombia's FARC guerrillas to lay down their arms is not new.

On Jan. 13, he said in a televised address: "I do not agree with the armed struggle, and that is one of the things that I want to talk to Marulanda (the head of the FARC who died last March) about."

Colombian officials claim that Venezuela has provided material support to the FARC. However, readers should know that the veracity of those claims has not been proven by Interpol or any other independent source.

Bear in mind that Colombia is ruled by President Alvaro Uribe, whose political allies are linked to paramilitaries, the extra-state militias designed to annihilate the FARC by extralegal means.

Venezuela's Chavez has in fact long been a voice for peace. In January and February of this year, his humanitarian mediation achieved the release of six hostages held by the FARC. Now he is asking them to free the hundreds that remain. That sounds consistent to me.

—*Olivia Burlingame Goumbri*

*Executive director*

*Venezuela Information Office*

Breakfast is the most important meal of the day.

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*Washington*

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## LETTERS

Compiled by NCR Staff

Publication date:

June 13, 2008

Section:

T. Letters to the Editor

### Hugo Chávez

I appreciated the article "Hugo Chávez has a mission -- and oil" (NCR, May 16). NCR stands out in the media for having printed the other side of the story: Venezuela is not a dictatorship, or a "threat" to countries in the region. However, I would point out that the popular Venezuelan leader does not provoke "undifferentiated disdain" among government officials; Chávez has had productive meetings with Thomas Shannon of the State Department, Massachusetts Rep. Bill Delahunt and New Mexico Gov. Bill Richardson, to name a few. Richardson asked Chávez to help negotiate the humanitarian release of U.S. citizens kidnapped by rebels in Colombia.

Most recently, Hugo Chávez met a delegation of the American Society of Newspaper Editors. He told them he anticipates better relations with the United States in 2009 and wants "to be able to work with the United States, together, and other countries as well, regardless of the ideology."

### MEGAN MORRISSEY

*Washington*

*Megan Morrissey is a staff member of the Venezuela Information Office in Washington.*



## Letters to the editor

# Prove claims before hurting Venezuela

01:00 AM EDT on Thursday, June 5, 2008

The Journal is wrong to support economic sanctions against Venezuela in the May 20 editorial "Chavez's mischief making." With no definitive proof of wrongdoing by Venezuela, it would be unwise for the U.S. to punish its second-largest trading partner in the hemisphere.

For the record, Colombia's allegation that Venezuela supported the FARC rebels is still unproven. Interpol did not verify the authenticity or source of the computer files used by Colombian officials to make that claim. Police simply said they were not altered after their alleged retrieval in a military attack on a FARC camp in Ecuador on March 1.

Just before the raid, President Chavez was pursuing humanitarian hostage talks with the rebels at the behest of the Colombians. His efforts had returned six civilian captives. However, Colombia's attack killed two dozen, including the rebel negotiator who got the hostages out.

It would be immoral to punish Venezuela while Colombia's claims are unproven. It would also hurt the United States, for bilateral trade has grown under President Chavez to reach over \$50 billion per year. Moreover, trade is likely to continue to increase, as Venezuela was recently certified as the country with the third-largest oil reserves in the world. Our ties should not be jeopardized for the sake of Colombia's empty politicking.


OLIVIA BURLINGAME GOUMBRI

Washington

The writer is director of the Venezuela Information Office.

# The Modesto Bee

modbee.com

 [Print This Article](#)

Posted on Thu, May. 29, 2008

## Accusations against Venezuela not proven

*last updated: May 29, 2008 02:22:36 AM*

Readers were poorly served by the Andrés Oppenheimer column, "Condemn renegade heads of Venezuela, Ecuador" (May 20).

INTERPOL investigated hard drives that Colombia says contain evidence that Venezuela and Ecuador supported the FARC, but didn't determine their source or authenticity. This means that the allegations against Venezuela remain just that: allegations.

Sanctioning Venezuela when there is no proof of wrongdoing is most certainly a bad idea for the U.S. Venezuela is our second largest trading partner in the hemisphere (worth \$50 billion per year) and sits atop the third largest reserves of crude oil in the world.

OAS Secretary General Insulza recently testified before the U.S. Congress that there is no evidence that Venezuela supports terrorist groups. Also contrary to the Oppenheimer column, Chávez has often said he seeks improved relations with the U.S., most recently last week before the American Society of Newspaper Editors.

**MEGAN MORRISSEY**

Venezuela Information Office

Washington, D.C.

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Phone: (209) 578-2000.



Posted on Tue, May. 20, 2008

## FARC ties unproven

The May 16 article *FARC report not likely to lead to U.S. sanctions on Venezuela* misses an important point. The validity of data used by Colombia to claim that Venezuela supports the FARC rebel group was not proven by the new Interpol report.

Instead, it only established that files on hard drives turned over by Colombian officials had not been altered after their supposed discovery at a FARC camp in Ecuador. In a press release, Interpol stated that its research "did not include the analysis of the content of documents, folders or other material on the eight seized FARC computer exhibits."

In other words, nothing is known of the life of these hard drives before Colombia leaked them to the press; not their basis in truth, nor their authorship. The Miami Herald has a responsibility to let readers know that Colombia's allegations against Venezuela remain just that -- allegations.

**MEGAN MORRISSEY**, media analyst, Venezuela Information Office, Washington, D.C.

March 29, 2008

### **Venezuela not an aggressor**

The Bob Barr column "Wary eye on South America" deems the continent a "security threat" but misses key information (@issue, March 19). First, it advocates putting U.S. defense resources in South America when in fact our government has sent large amounts of military aid to Colombia for nearly a decade — \$5 billion since 1999 — and violence and drugs still flow freely.

Also, tense Andean relations are not the result of "saber rattling" by President Hugo Chavez of Venezuela, but of Colombia's offensive aerial strike in Ecuador. The column downplays the cross-border attack. Readers should know, though, that more than two dozen rebels and civilians were killed in the bombing, which was conducted by 60 Colombian commandos.

Barr's column rebukes Venezuela on the basis of poor reasoning. Unlike American leaders, Chavez has worked to free three U.S. military contractors held hostage in Colombia since 2003. In the end, it demonstrates just what it warns against: "oversimplification and misunderstanding."

OLIVIA BURLINGAME GOUMBRI

Goumbri is executive director of the Venezuela Information Office in Washington, D.C.

**March 11, 2008**

**LETTER**

## **The Dispute in the Andes**

To the Editor:

The March 6 editorial "Take a Deep Breath" cites "meddling and manipulation" in the Colombia-Ecuador clash by President Hugo Chávez, missing the point of why Venezuela is affected.

The Venezuela-Colombia border is three-quarters the length of the United States-Mexico frontier, making it one of the longest common borders in the hemisphere.

Venezuela has already suffered because of the Colombian conflict, receiving tens of thousands of refugees, and has attempted to stop the spread of violence through a humanitarian mediation.

Colombia's deadly raid in Ecuador killed Raúl Reyes, the chief negotiator for both Venezuela and France in hostage talks with the guerrillas.

President Chávez is not, as you write, trying to win popularity by getting involved. Instead, he has put peace in Colombia on the regional agenda, a cause taken up again over the weekend during the Rio group meeting, resulting in reconciliation between the three Andean nations.

Olivia B. Goumbri  
Executive Director, Venezuela Information Office  
Washington, March 10, 2008

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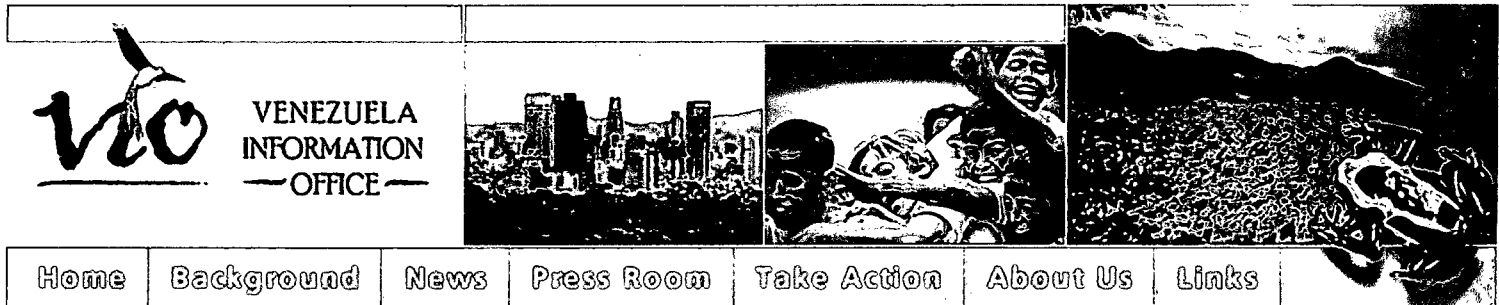
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## **Part IV: Internet Information**

## Olivia Burlingame Gombri

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**From:** Venezuela Information Office [newsandaction@veninfo.org]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, March 04, 2008 1:07 PM  
**To:** olivia@veninfo.org  
**Subject:** North Virginia Events on Venezuela this Week!



### VIO Venezuela News and Action

Friends in Virginia and the DC metro area,

We hope you can attend some or all of these afternoon events being held by the Northern Virginia Community College this week on Venezuela. For more information visit: <http://www.nvcc.edu/alexandria/Calendar/ALcalendar.htm>

### March 3, 4, 5, 6, 2008, NVCC INTERNATIONAL STUDIES SEMINAR "VENEZUELA AND HUGO CHÁVEZ"

All events in Room 158 at 2pm

---

Monday, March 3, 2pm  
**"An Introduction to Venezuela."**

Dr. Jim Baer and Dr. Lawrence Rich will speak on the history and culture of Venezuela from its colonial beginnings to 1959.

Olivia Burlingame Gombri, Executive Director of the Venezuela Information Office, will speak on the history of Venezuela from 1959 to the present.

---

Tuesday, March 4, 2pm  
**"Hugo Chávez"**

Journalist and Author Bart Jones will discuss his book *Hugo! The Hugo Chávez Story from Mud Hut to Perpetual Revolution* (Steerforth Press, 2007). Copies will be available for purchase.

---

Wednesday, March 5, 2PM  
**Presentation on Venezuelan Culture**

Cultural Attache from the embassy of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, Patricia Abdelnour, will hold a lively presentation on Venezuela's culture, influenced by African, Indian, and Spanish histories.

---

Thursday, March 6, 2pm

**Film: "Chávez: Inside the Coup"**

This award-winning documentary (2002) also called "The Revolution Will Not Be Televised" was made by two independent filmmakers who were inside the presidential palace on April 11, 2002 when Hugo Chávez was forcibly removed from office. This film records what was probably history's shortest-lived coup d'état.

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**Megan Morrissey**

**From:** VIO Venezuela News & Action [newsandaction@veninfo.org]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, March 05, 2008 5:10 PM  
**To:** media@veninfo.org  
**Subject:** VIO News & Action-The Facts on the Andean Conflict and What You Can Do

**VIO Venezuela News and Action****VENEZUELA NEWS & ACTION - March 5, 2008****COLOMBIAN INCURSION INTO ECUADOR KILLS 20, SPURS STRONG RESPONSE BY REGION**

Last weekend, the Colombian government led a military attack on the FARC in Ecuadorean territory, killing more than 20 persons including a key FARC negotiator involved in recent hostage releases. Since then, most news coverage has focused on the reactions of Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez and to a lesser extent Ecuadorean President Rafael Correa, excluding the actions of the Colombian military and its president.

Colombia's raid in Ecuador killed Raul Reyes, the FARC's second-in-command and a historical actor in efforts for peace. He had been working toward a humanitarian accord brokered by President Chavez and was in the process of negotiating the release of 12 more hostages -- including ex-presidential candidate Ingrid Betancourt -- with the French government. His death comes shortly after hostage negotiations brokered by Chavez yielded the release of a total of 6 Colombian citizens. Many analysts suggest that this most recent action by the Colombian government was meant to bring an abrupt halt to future bids for peace.

Following the bombing, Ecuador and Venezuela both recalled their diplomats from Colombia and stationed troops along their borders. Considering that Venezuela has been accused of harboring the FARC by the U.S. and Colombia, it seemed a justifiable preventative move. To date, Venezuela has moved 10 battalions to the border, totalling about 9,000 troops. To hear more on this debate you can listen to or watch the Jim Lehrer News Hour special on this on our website.

After the aerial attack, 60 Colombian ground troops further violated Ecuador's sovereignty and raided the rebel camp, according to President Correa in Ecuador. He called this "unacceptable aggression." President Uribe then alleged that evidence was found at the site -- on still intact computers -- indicating payment by Chavez to the FARC. To date, no verifiable proof has been released. The Miami Herald recognized today that "There was no independent verification of the documents." The AP also reported that "the Colombian military provided no proof of payment." Yet, the press has proceeded to report this

news as though it is fact. The Venezuelan government has consistently denied the accusations, calling them "laughable."

Tensions were brought to an all time high early this week when Colombian President Alvaro Uribe accused President Chavez of supporting "genocide," citing the alleged funding to the FARC that still remains to be proven. The Colombian president now plans to bring Chavez before the International Criminal Court. While this move makes for great headlines, it does not accurately depict what has been occurring in Colombia and the region in the last few decades, nor the actors that have been involved.

### **OAS, REGIONAL LEADERS & HUMAN RIGHTS GROUPS QUESTION COLOMBIA'S ACTIONS**

Yesterday, at a special session of the OAS, Ecuador asked countries to condemn the Colombian raid on its territory and demand an investigation. Those who questioned the Colombian incursion include Italy, France, Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Peru, Mexico and Venezuela. France's foreign minister said, "It is not good news that Reyes, the man to whom we talked and we had contact, has been killed." On the other hand, in the U.S., President Bush said he supports Colombia unconditionally and used the opportunity to push the US-Colombia free trade agreement.

U.S. Congressman Eliot Engel, Chairman of the House Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on the Western Hemisphere, sent a letter calling on the OAS Secretary General Jos   Miguel Insulza and Permanent Council Chairman Cornelius Smith to send a high-level delegation to the Andean region to negotiate a reduction in tensions between Ecuador, Colombia and Venezuela. The letter - signed by a bipartisan group of 14 House members - also calls on the OAS to put in place a better process of crisis communication between the three governments. The letter fails to condemn the Colombian government for their violation of international treaties.

According to the Latin American Association for Human Rights (ALDHU), an international NGO based in Ecuador that works with over 20 nations, the attacks were "at odds with the most elemental principles of International Humanitarian Law." Juan de Dios Parra, the general secretary of ALDHU, called the events an "invasion" and a "massacre" which "violated all the international norms regulating the respect for borders." Colombian human rights groups also opposed the actions of the Uribe government and said it should be held accountable for what Human Rights Watch has called "one of the worst human rights records in the world."

### **WHAT YOU CAN DO**

#### **Contact your Congressional Representatives in the House and Senate and ask them to:**

- Condemn the illegal actions of the Colombian government in Ecuador, which endangers the entire Andean Region.
- Demand that Colombia take a politically negotiated path toward peace in the region. No more U.S. military funding for Colombia.

**To find out who represents you in Congress, please type your address in** [here](#).

- You can also write to your local news outlets to set the record straight on the current situation in the Andean Region.
- Join tomorrow's actions for "Peace in Colombia and the Andean Region" by participating in local



actions across the U.S. For more information visit [here](#).

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**Megan Morrissey**

**From:** VIO News & Action-March 27, 2008 [newsandaction@veninfo.org]  
**Sent:** Thursday, March 27, 2008 5:24 PM  
**To:** media@veninfo.org  
**Subject:** Post Hostility, State Sponsor of Terrorism Designation Looms

**VIO Venezuela News and Action****CONGRESS MEMBERS BEGIN GROUNDWORK TO DESIGNATE VENEZUELA AS "STATE SPONSOR OF TERRORISM"**

Since Representative Darrell Issa (CA-R) introduced House Resolution 965 condemning President Chavez last month, the political fervor in Congress to designate Venezuela as a state sponsor of terrorism has increased noticeably.

This is not the first time Congress has moved to condemn Venezuela. In fact, this is the fourth year in a row that it has done so. In 2005, Rep. Connie Mack (R-FL) introduced an anti-Venezuela resolution to increase US funding for the activities of the political opposition in Venezuela. In 2006, a resolution by Rep. Dan Burton (R-IN) sought to condemn Venezuela for allegedly failing to cooperate with the U.S. in the fight against drug trafficking. In 2007, Congress pushed hard to pass a resolution condemning Venezuela on freedom of expression.

This month, Connie Mack (R-FL) and other Republican Members of Congress are attempting to go a step further with House Resolution 1049, calling on the State Department to designate Venezuela a state sponsor of terrorism. This would impose a number of sanctions on Venezuela and U.S. companies that do business there.

**Visit our ACTION CENTER today to find out more about H. Res. 1049 and take action by sending a letter to your elected officials. It's fast and easy!**

**WASHINGTON POST INCREASES HOSTILITY TOWARD VENEZUELA**

News outlets in the US haven't characterized Venezuela much better. Overall, press coverage of Venezuela in the U.S. has been negative and one-sided, and media outlets have knowingly refused to cover key issues that debunk this viewpoint.

The amount of half-truths and misinformation spread by the Washington Post alone about Venezuela has increased immensely over the last year and a half, according to a recent investigation by the Ministry of Communication and Information in Caracas. This is especially

true of the opinion section, overseen by the notoriously anti-Venezuela editorial page editor, Jackson Diehl.

Venezuela's Minister of Communication and Information, Andres Izarra, wrote this week in a letter to the Post that the daily has "manipulated and outright censored" information on Venezuela. The paper consistently amplified negative coverage of Venezuela through generalizations that are neither credible nor based in fact, and strategically downplayed achievements. The letter states: "Mr. Diehl, you should certainly know that the United States is currently waging an international war against terrorism. Within that framework, the Bush administration has clearly stated that those nations associated with or friendly to terrorist states or groups can be subject to preemptive invasion or intervention. Are you seeking such an end in Venezuela?"

Of particular concern are Washington Post editorials from February and March that implied support for a boycott of Venezuelan oil and warned that Venezuela could be in "danger."

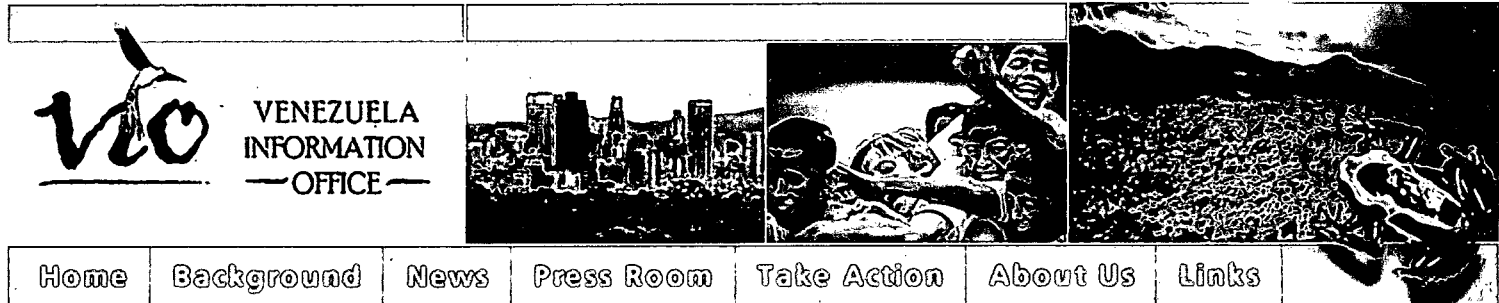
Read the Minister's complete letter [here](#). Share your own opinion of the Post's coverage of Venezuela by writing to the readers' representative: [ombudsman@washpost.com](mailto:ombudsman@washpost.com)

[Click here to unsubscribe](#)

## Olivia Burlingame Gombri

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**From:** Venezuela Information Office [newsandaction@veninfo.org]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, April 01, 2008 9:46 AM  
**To:** olivia@veninfo.org  
**Subject:** DC-Dance Salsa for the Revolution!



### VIO Venezuela News and Action

Dear friends in the DC metro area,

We thought you would be interested in the below event taking place this Thursday at the Bolivarian Hall in Washington DC. Please pass on to others.

Regards, THE VIO

### DANCE SALSA FOR THE REVOLUTION

Dance instructor Aleksey Garcia will offer a Salsa training session in Washington, DC. as part of a fundraising event to help the Venezuela Solidarity Network, an independent grassroots organization in the US, which supports the Bolivarian Revolution.

Enjoy a fun evening improving your Salsa skills while celebrating with local people interested in and involved in Venezuelan issues.

**Thursday, April 3, 6:30pm**  
The Bolivarian Hall, 2443 Massachusetts Ave. NW  
Washington DC

**For more information call 202-544-9355 or email [ven@afgj.org](mailto:ven@afgj.org)**

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## **Olivia Burlingame Goumbri**

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**From:** Venezuela Information Office [newsandaction@veninfo.org]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, April 01, 2008 8:57 AM  
**To:** olivia@veninfo.org  
**Subject:** LA Hosts Venezuela Event-April 11, 2008

LA ASOCIACION SIMON BOLIVAR DE LOS ANGELES (SBLA).

### **INVITATION TO THE COMMUNITY OF LOS ANGELES TO A PUBLIC FORUM:**

Invita a toda la comunidad de Los Angeles al foro público :

**VENEZUELA, REVOLUTION & DEMOCRACY!**  
**¡VENEZUELA, REVOLUCION Y DEMOCRACIA!**

FRIDAY, APRIL 11, 6:30PM - 9:30PM  
Viernes 11 de Abril de 6:30 PM. - 9:30 PM.

A CLIP FROM THE REVOLUTION WILL NOT BE TELEVISED WILL OPEN UP THE PROGRAM.  
(A COPY OF THIS DOCUMENTARY WILL BE GIVEN TO THE FIRST 50 ATTENDEES)  
Se proyectara la versión corta (30 minutos) del Documental "La Revolución no será televisada". (Se obsequiara una copia del documental completo a los primeros 50 asistentes).

### **INVITED SPEAKERS**

Oradores Invitados:

JANET MADRIZ, VENEZUELAN DEPUTY TO THE ANDEAN PARLIAMENT  
Janet Madriz, Diputada Venezolana al Parlamento Andino.

DOLORES HUERTA, CO-FOUNDER OF THE UNION OF CAMPEÑINOS  
Dolores Huerta, Co-Fundadora del Sindicato de Campesinos.

### **PANEL DISCUSSANTS:**

Panel de Reactores:

MIGUEL TINKER SALAS, PROFESSOR OF LATIN AMERICAN STUDIES AT THE UNIVERSITY OF POMONA. EDITOR OF THE BOOK: "HUGO CHAVEZ AND THE DECLINE OF AN EXCEPTIONAL DEMOCRACY".  
Miguel Thinker Salas, Profesor de Estudios Latinoamericanos en la Universidad de Pomona. Editor del Libro: "Hugo Chávez y el decline de una democracia excepcional".

NATIVO LOPEZ, PRESIDENT OF THE MEXICAN AMERICAN POLITICAL ASSOCIATION  
Nativo López, Presidente de la Asociación Política Mexicana Americana.

ARMANDO GUDINO, DIRECTOR OF PROGRAMMING AT PACIFICA RADIO, LOS ANGELES, KPFK.  
Armando Gudiño, Director de Programación de Radio Pacifica Los Angeles, KPFK.

**MODERATOR: RICARDO MORENO, PRESIDENT OF THE SIMON BOLIVAR ASSOCIATION.**  
Moderador: Ricardo Moreno, Presidente de la Asociación Simón Bolívar.

**IMMANUEL PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH 3300 WILSHIRE BLVD, LA CA 90010.**

Iglesia Presbiteriana Immanuel 3300 Wilshire Blvd, Los Angeles CA 90010. Esquina de Berendo St y Wilshire Blvd., dos cuadras al oeste de la estación del Metro en Vermont Avenue.

<http://www.immanuelpres.org/location.htm>

**Para mas información comunicarse al 626-676-0142 o al correo electrónico [rvenezolano@yahoo.com](mailto:rvenezolano@yahoo.com)**

Endorsan:

La Asociación Nacional de Salvadoreños (SANA)

La Asociación Político Mexicano Americana (MAPA)

La Asociación Nacional Nicaragüense Americana (NICANA)

El Instituto William Velásquez. (WVCI).

**\*THE EVENT WILL BE IN SPANISH & TRANSLATED INTO ENGLISH.**

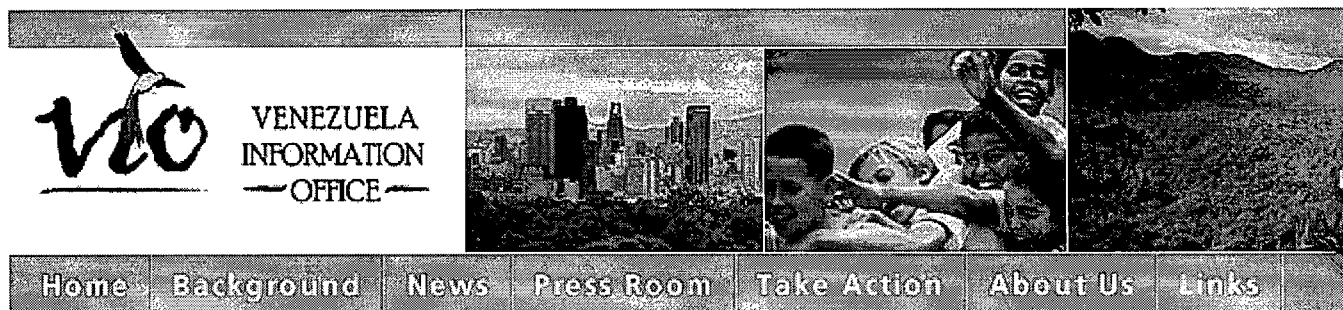
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Version: 8.0.100 / Virus Database: 270.4.1/1510 - Release Date: 6/19/2008 3:21 PM

**Megan Morrissey**

**From:** Venezuela Information Office [vio@veninfo.org]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, April 09, 2008 2:43 PM  
**To:** media@veninfo.org  
**Subject:** 6th anniversary of the April 2002 coup d'etat against President Chávez

**VIO Venezuela News and Action**

Friends -

**Washington continuous the attacks on Venezuela -**

This weekend is the 6th anniversary of the April 2002 coup d'etat against President Hugo ChÁvez, financed by the current U.S. government. The Office of the Inspector General of the U.S. Department of State stated that, "â€it is clear that NED, Department of Defense (DOD), and other U.S. assistance programs provided training, institution building, and other support to individuals and organizations understood to be actively involved in the brief ouster of the ChÁvez governmentâ€" - To read more, see: "A Review of U.S. Policy Toward Venezuela"

Today, six years later, a small group of conservative U.S. members of Congress have introduced a resolution calling for Venezuela to be designated a state sponsor of terrorism. The resolution, H.Res. 1049, asks that the State Department place Venezuela on a list of countries that provide support to terrorist organizations, a designation that would impose a number of sanctions on Venezuela and U.S. companies that do business there. Though various critics of President Hugo ChÁvez have accused Venezuela of supporting terrorist groups, no credible or verifiable evidence has ever been presented to substantiate those claims.

**Mobilize!**

Across the United States, local and national groups are calling their members of Congress to oppose H.Res.1049 and organizing events to commemorate April 11th and celebrate the return of democracy in Venezuela on April 13th. Take action by joining local events in your community.

**Main events nationwide:****Washington, DC:**

**April 11,** Screening of "The Revolution Will Not Be Televised" and discussion with the participation of Venezuelan Ambassador Bernardo Alvarez. On April 11th at 6pm at the Bolivarian Hall, 2443 Massachusetts Ave NW, Washington. RSVP: (202) 342-6828.

**April 13,** Demonstration on Sunday April 13th at 12 noon at the SimÃ³n BolÃ¡var Plaza, behind the

OAS (17th Street & Constitution Ave., NW), where a caravan will take off around Washington DC, passing by the White House and ending at the Wesley United Methodist Church on 5312 Connecticut Ave NW. Wear a white shirt symbolizing peace and democracy, and bring your vehicle, if you have one. Contact: [natali@veninfo.org](mailto:natali@veninfo.org)

**New York City, NY:**

**April 11**, Rally to defend and support Venezuela's Bolivarian Revolution. On April 11th at 11am in front of the Venezuelan Consulate on 7 East 51ST St, NYC , NY  
(Between Madison Ave & 5th Ave near St. Patrick's Cathedral). Contact: [cbalbertolovera@gmail.com](mailto:cbalbertolovera@gmail.com)

**Los Angeles, CA:**

**April 11**, Showing of "The Revolution Will Not Be Televised" and Public Forum on "Venezuela, Revolution, Democracy" with Venezuelan Delegate to the Andean Parliament, Janet Madriz; Dolores Huerta, Co-founder of the Agricultural Workers Association; Professor Miguel Thinker Salas; KPFFK Director Armando Gudiño, and activists Nativo Lopez. Event starts at 6:30pm on Immanuel Presbyterian Church on 3300 Wilshire Blvd, Los Angeles CA 90010. Contact: [rvenezolano@yahoo.com](mailto:rvenezolano@yahoo.com)

There are other events happening nationwide in cities such as Houston, San Francisco, Phoenix, St. Petersburg, Minneapolis, and Tucson. For information, please contact [vio@veninfo.org](mailto:vio@veninfo.org)

Reminder: Participate in the Venezuela Solidarity Network's national symposium on What's Up With Venezuela: Participatory Democracy or Democracy as Usual? on April 18-20, 2008 at historic Howard University in Washington, DC.

VIO Team  
[www.veninfo.org](http://www.veninfo.org)

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**Megan Morrissey**

**From:** Venezuela Information Office [newsandaction@veninfo.org]  
**Sent:** Thursday, April 24, 2008 1:54 PM  
**To:** media@veninfo.org  
**Subject:** Successful Symposium, Take Action on The Times

**VIO Venezuela News and Action**

Dear Friends,

Thanks to all who participated in the Venezuela Solidarity Network's symposium at Howard University last weekend. The event brought together activists, academics, religious leaders, and students representing 22 states as well as the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico.

The successful symposium presented an extraordinary group of experts on Venezuela who discussed issues of participatory democracy, the environment, the electoral system, the economy, energy, Indigenous and Afro-Venezuelan groups, US-Venezuela relations, and other themes relevant to today's Venezuela.

The symposium ended with congressional visits on Monday, April 21st, where participants spoke with staffers representing members from the House Subcommittee on the Western Hemisphere. They shared their views on Venezuela's democracy and opposed H.Res. 1049, which attempts to designate Venezuela a "state sponsor of terrorism" despite a lack of evidence.

**Now, take action!**

Today, the New York Times published an extremely misleading editorial on Venezuela, called "Chávez's Takeover Spree"

**Here are some facts that The Times refuses to acknowledge:**

1. No expropriations have occurred under the Chávez government. On the contrary, Venezuela's nationalization plan involves due respect for property and investor rights. Moreover, economists and development experts have noted that the switch from private to state ownership can improve efficiency and broaden access to services. This way, Venezuelan citizens may enjoy the full benefits of national sovereignty over resources.
2. The editorial states that the Chávez government wants to lower the price of products such as milk in a self-serving effort to bolster support among poor Venezuelans. Perhaps The Times forgot that the UN World Food Programme recently described soaring global food prices as a "silent tsunami" that could

cause hunger among hundreds of millions of people. Venezuela is at the forefront of efforts to offset this problem; ALBA countries met yesterday to create a \$100 million food security fund for staples such as rice, beans and corn to mitigate sharp rises in world grain prices. Food security is a human rights issue, not propaganda, as The Times states.

3. The Times expresses that Venezuela's economy is suffering. On the contrary, Venezuela has experienced very rapid growth; it grew by 10.3 percent in 2006 and about 8.4 percent last year. The poverty rate has been cut in half from its peak of 55.1 percent in 2003 to 27.5 percent in the first half of 2007.

4. No one denies that inflation, now running over 20 percent, is a problem. But it should be noted that inflation in Venezuela was much higher in the pre-Chávez years, running at 36 percent in 1998 and 100 percent in 1996. Under Chavez, inflation recovered, falling from 40 percent annually at the peak of the oil strike in February 2003 to 10.4 percent in May 2006, before climbing again to its present rate.

5. The Times wrongly states that Venezuelans are fed up with Mr. Chávez's "incompetent and authoritarian ways." Undoubtedly, a closer look is needed at Venezuela's participatory democracy, where people are empowered to directly take part in decisions that affect their communities. This is not an authoritarian concept, but true democracy at its best.

**Take action by sending a letter to the editor of no more than 150 words to The Times by e-mailing: [letters@nytimes.com](mailto:letters@nytimes.com) or faxing (212)556-3622.**

For questions, please contact the VIO at [newsandaction@vio.org](mailto:newsandaction@vio.org)

The VIO Team

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## Olivia Burlingame Gombri

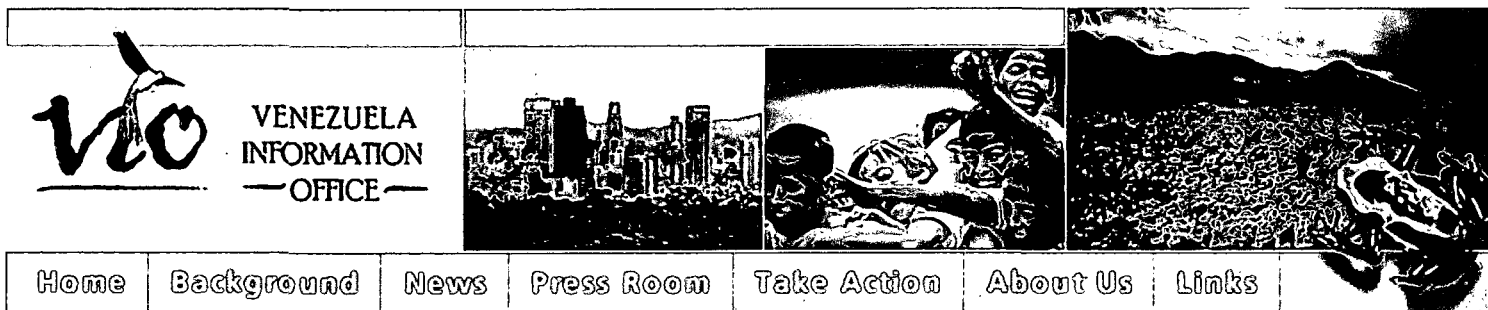
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**From:** Olivia Burlingame Gombri [olivia@veninfo.org]  
**Sent:** Monday, May 12, 2008 10:31 AM  
**To:** 'Olivia Burlingame Gombri'  
**Subject:** Venezuela panel today!

Just a reminder, please join us this afternoon for a discussion with Venezuelan Ambassador Bernardo Alvarez and Venezuelan artists at TransAfrica Forum on Venezuela's new vision of culture. Please pass on to others.

---

**From:** VIO News & Action [mailto:newsandaction@veninfo.org]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, May 07, 2008 10:44 AM  
**To:** olivia@veninfo.org  
**Subject:** Venezuelan Forum & Music Group in DC next week!

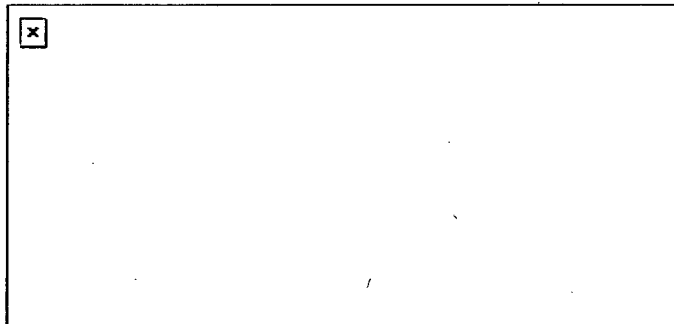


### VIO Venezuela News and Action

Dear friends in the Washington DC metro region,

We thought you would find these upcoming events on Venezuela interesting. Both next week, the first is a public forum on Venezuela's new vision of culture and the second is a musical performance by Los Vasallos del Sol, one of Venezuela's most dynamic musical ensembles! We hope you can join us and spread the word.

Regards, The VIO



**Presents**

## **"The Dynamics of Cultural Diversity Inclusion in Venezuela "** **Panel Discussion**

**with**

**Venezuelan Ambassador Bernardo Alvarez**

**Jesus Rondon - Founding member of Los Vasallos del Sol**

**Adriana Manrique - Cultural Promotion's Director of the  
Fundacion Bigott.**

**Please join us as we discuss the African and indigenous  
musical heritage of Venezuela and its new cultural policies  
that foster a plural vision and the promotion of the diversity of  
its peoples.**

**Monday May 12 th , 2008**

**5:30-7pm**

**1629 K Street, NW, Suite 1100**

**Washington , DC 20006**

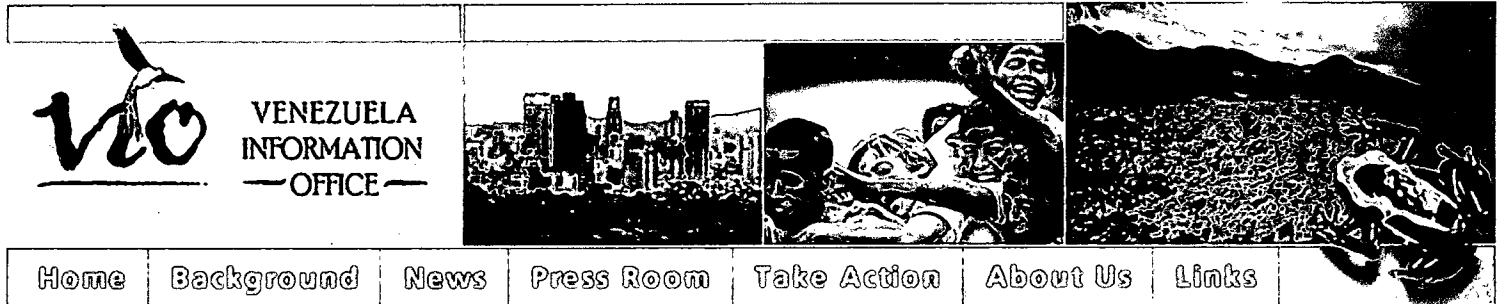
**Tel 202.223.1960**

[www.transafricaforum.org](http://www.transafricaforum.org)

## **Olivia Burlingame Gombri**

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**From:** VIO News & Action [newsandaction@veninfo.org]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, May 07, 2008 10:44 AM  
**To:** olivia@veninfo.org  
**Subject:** Venezuelan Forum & Music Group in DC next week!

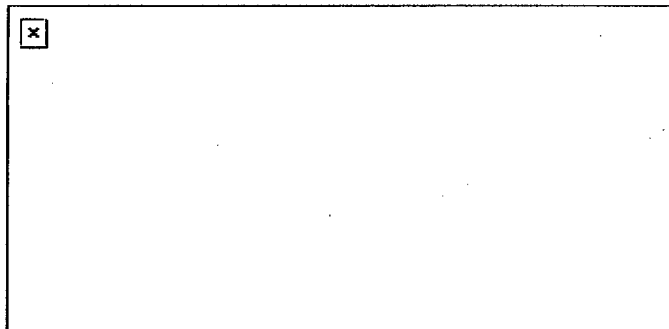


### **VIO Venezuela News and Action**

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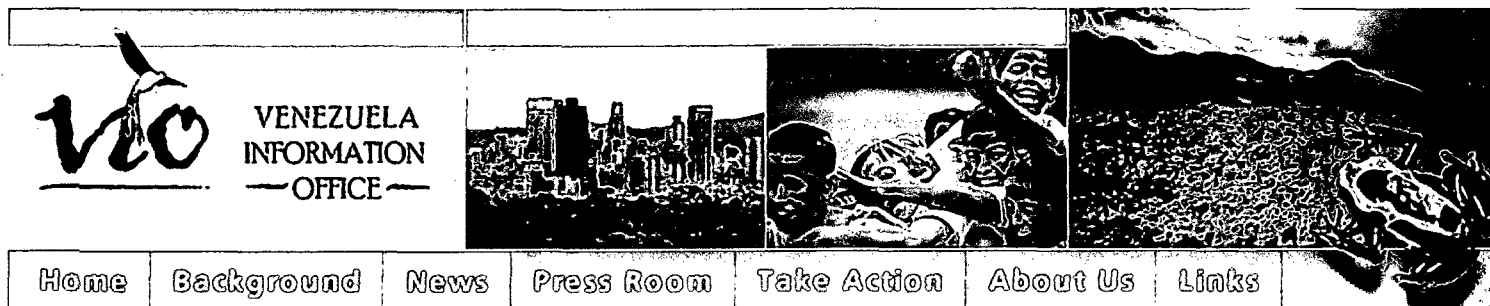
**Washington , DC 20006**

**Tel 202.223.1960**

[www.transafricaforum.org](http://www.transafricaforum.org)

**Olivia Burlingame Gombri**

**From:** VIO Venezuela News & Action [newsandaction@veninfo.org]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, May 07, 2008 12:03 PM  
**To:** olivia@veninfo.org  
**Subject:** Venezuelan Forum & Music Group in Bay Area Friday and Sat!



**VIO Venezuela News and Action**

Dear friends in the Bay area,

We hope you will join us at the following events this weekend, beginning Friday with a community forum on Venezuela's new vision of culture. Please pass on to all those you think might be interested.

The VIO

# *The Dynamics of Cultural Diversity Inclusion in Venezuela*

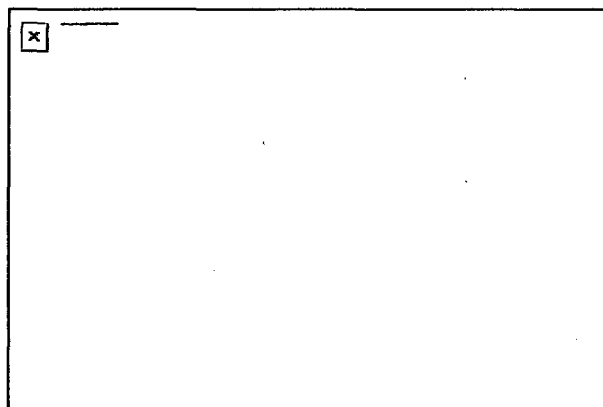
*Friday, May 9 at 6:30pm*

**Mission Cultural Center for Latino Arts**

**2868 Mission St., San Francisco**

**For more info: 415-  
821-1155**

**Patricia  
Abdelnour -**



## **Embassy of Venezuela's**

### **Cultural Attache**

**Jesus Rondon - Founding member of Los**

**Vasallos del Sol**

**Adriana Manrique - Director of Cultural Promotion  
for the**

**Fundacion Bigott**

**Please join us as we discuss the African and indigenous musical heritage of Venezuela and its new cultural policies that foster a plural vision and the promotion of the diversity of its peoples. This first U.S. tour for Los Vasallos del Sol is presented by the Embassy of Venezuela and sponsored by Citgo Corporation in collaboration with Fundación Bigott, a private cultural foundation. The tour exemplifies Venezuela's new vision of cultural inclusiveness and promotion of cultural diversity. The 28-member ensemble interprets diverse music and dance traditions that portray Venezuelan heritage, from the African-inspired rhythms of the Caribbean to the folk ballads of the inland plains. The group has recorded five albums, most recently their 15-year anniversary disc, Quince años (2005).**



The Embassy of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela  
presents:

# Los Vasallos del Sol



Direct from Venezuela! With a repertoire that covers the coastal country's history from its pre-Hispanic and African roots to today's popular rhythms and dance forms, Los Vasallos del Sol delivers a high-energy performance with contagious beats that will have you jump to your feet and dance!

Also performing:

The Bay Area's Venezuelan Music Project, led by Jackie Rago, combines Indigenous-Venezuelan, West-African and Spanish-European influences.

Date: May 10th, 2008

Time: 1:00 pm to 3:00 pm

Location: Esplanade  
760 Howard Street,  
San Francisco, CA



Sponsored by:



**Megan Morrissey**

**From:** VIO News and Action [newsandaction@veninfo.org]  
**Sent:** Thursday, May 15, 2008 5:49 PM  
**To:** media@veninfo.org  
**Subject:** INTERPOL does not back up the Colombian government's attacks on Venezuela

**VIO Venezuela News and Action**

Dear Friends,

Today, INTERPOL released its forensic report on the contents of hard drives allegedly seized by the Colombian military from the FARC camp it bombed in Ecuador on March 1st. The U.S. media has taking the report completely out of context. Although INTERPOL did not gauge the accuracy of the information on the hard drives, the press is using it to accuse Venezuela of supporting terrorism.

**INTERPOL's report DOES NOT back up the Colombian government's attacks on Venezuela**

The report clearly states: "the scope of INTERPOL's computer forensic examination was limited to (a) determining the actual data contained in the eight seized FARC computer exhibits, (b) verifying whether the user files had been modified in any way on or after 1 March 2008, and (c) determining whether Colombian law enforcement authorities had handled and examined the eight seized FARC computer exhibits in conformity with internationally recognized principles."

INTERPOL's stated intention "was not to evaluate the accuracy or the source of the exhibits' content." Therefore, the investigation "did not include the analysis of the content of documents, folders or other material on the eight seized FARC computer exhibits."

[Read the press release about the report](#)  
[Read the complete report](#)

**MISINFORMING THE PUBLIC**

It is important to understand that in the U.S., the contents of the laptops have been strategically released to the press by Colombian officials to build a case against Venezuela. This fact was seen in today's article by Juan Forero in *the Washington Post*, which includes the allegation that Venezuela would have helped the FARC acquire missiles.

**The fact** is that INTERPOL'S forensic examination of the laptops found no evidence that they had been altered after March 1st, **but did not determine their accuracy or source.** Media accounts have nonetheless taken the Colombian officials at their word, while assigning guilt to Venezuela despite a

lack of proof.

For more information on Venezuela's efforts against terrorism, please read the VIO factsheet

**TAKE ACTION:**

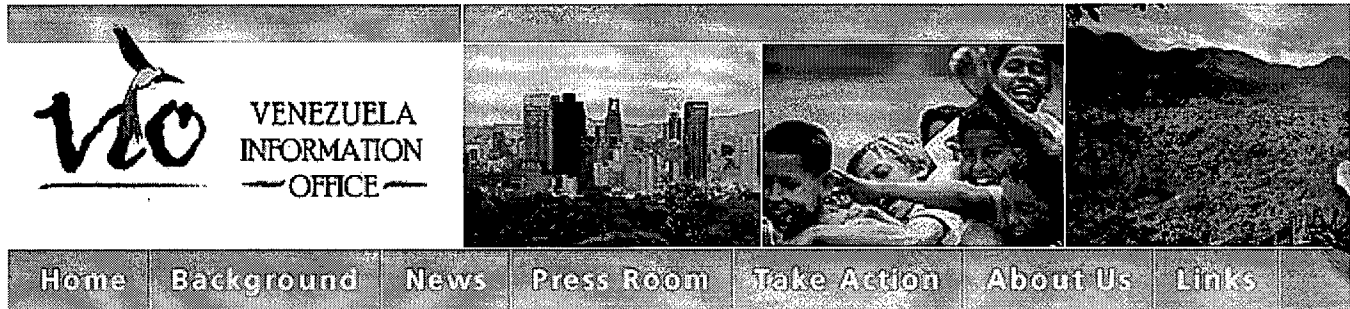
Contact your local newspapers and your Congressional Representative today and tell them that **INTERPOL's forensic examination does not condemn Venezuela as State sponsored of terrorism nor validates accusations made by the government of Colombia.**

For further questions, please contact the VIO Team!

[Click here to unsubscribe](#)

**Megan Morrissey**

**From:** VIO News and Action [newsandaction@veninfo.org]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, June 03, 2008 4:22 PM  
**To:** media@veninfo.org  
**Subject:** Stop biased articles by the Times

**VIO Venezuela News and Action**

Dear Friends,

Today's article by the New York Times, "Chávez Decree Tightens Hold on Intelligence", demonstrates the *Times'* ongoing attempt to mislead the general public about the intentions of the Venezuelan government.

While one might have expected the article to describe the content of Venezuela's new intelligence law and discuss a range of reactions to it, the scope was limited only to criticisms by the opposition.

**Here are the facts:**

The law eliminates Venezuela's 50 year old secret political police, known as DISIP, created during the dictatorship of Perez Jimenez. It also eliminates Venezuela's agency of Military intelligence (DIM). In their place, the General Intelligence Office and the General Counterintelligence Office have been created, both overseen by the Interior Ministry and the Ministry of Defense.

Refining the intelligence capacity of the state does not allow for a "tightening control" by President Chavez; rather, for the first time Venezuela is providing a legal framework for carrying out and monitoring intelligence activities of the nation. Many actions that once were left to the discretion of the DISIP and the DIM are now subject to oversight. Moreover, the existence of this law provides a level of transparency that was lacking before.

The dissolution of the DISIP and DIM was long overdue. For decades, Venezuelans feared these agencies for their involvement in nefarious activity and repression, including incidents

involving the escape of notorious criminals. Most importantly, from 1967 to 1974, terrorist Luis Posada Carriles was a high level official at the DISIP. This very important point was passed over by the *Times*.

As opposed to what the *Times* implies, the new law guarantees the rights of Freedom of Expression and Due Process under the Law, as established in Venezuela's Constitution. In Article 21, for instance, it is clearly outlined that those prosecuted are guaranteed the right to a public defense.

Venezuela has recently experienced threats to its national security, this is best exemplified by the unsuccessful 2002 coup d'etat that was supported by the Bush administration. Moreover, just last month, a U.S. fighter jet violated Venezuela's airspace and to date the U.S. has not provided an adequate explanation. Venezuela is reorganizing its intelligence community not only to guarantee the security of its democratic institutions but also to guarantee that intelligence operations are carried out under the legal framework of the Constitution.

President Chavez passed this law using the Enabling Law, granted to him for 18 months by the National Assembly in January 2007.

Finally, the biased article by the *Times*, even states that the Chavez's government "has already used voter registration data to purge employees deemed disloyal to the president." The *Times* needs to be reminded that Venezuela's elections are among the most heavily scrutinized in the world and to make such accusations today are misleading. While one incident of this occurred in the past, initiated by the opposition (not the Chavez government), this practice has been condemned and never tolerated by the President.

### **Take Action**

Write a 150-word letter to the editor of the *New York Times*. Do not allow the *Times* to keep spreading misinformation and unbalanced coverage.

Write to: [letters@nytimes.com](mailto:letters@nytimes.com) or fax it to: 212-556-3622. Don't forget to include your name, address and phone number.

For further questions, please contact the VIO at 202 347 8081.

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**Megan Morrissey**

**From:** Venezuela Information Office [newsandaction@veninfo.org]  
**Sent:** Thursday, June 26, 2008 12:21 PM  
**To:** media@veninfo.org  
**Subject:** VIO News & Action-Lots to Celebrate as Independence Day Approaches

**VIO Venezuela News and Action**

Dear Friends,

As Venezuela's independence day approaches (one day after our own 4th of July festivities) citizens in that South American nation have much to celebrate. Saturday, July 5th marks the anniversary of liberation from Spanish rule, and celebrations to honor the independence heroes are sure to be grand.

One such hero is Francisco de Miranda, the spark that lit the fire of the Venezuelan revolution. He was born in 1750 to a wealthy family, but his vision of a unified and free Spanish America led him to fight in various revolutionary wars. He made his first attempt to run the Spanish out of Venezuela in 1806, and is credited with unfurling the first tricolor Venezuelan national flag in the historic city of Coro. Together with his comrade in struggle, Simon Bolivar, Miranda helped Venezuela achieve an early independence on April 19, 1810. Just two years later, though, Miranda was forced to surrender to the Spaniards, and he died in exile soon after.



A new campaign for independence was waged by Simon Bolivar. After about a decade of fighting, he defeated Spanish colonists in the famous 'Battle of Carabobo' on June 24, 1821. This led to the establishment of an independent republic under the banner of the Republic of Gran Colombia. Venezuela was officially declared free on July 5, 1811. Simon Bolivar is the best remembered of the independence heroes, and his writings leave a political legacy in South American that is unparalleled.

Now, 197 years have passed since those valiant leaders freed Venezuela from the clutches of foreign rule. Some say

President Hugo Chavez is merely expanding upon their courageous efforts. To find out about local events in honor of Venezuela's independence day, go to our event section at [Venworld](#).

### **VENEZUELA'S MUSIC PROGRAM IN THE SPOTLIGHT**

This week, the state-sponsored social programs of the Chavez administration took center stage in the press. In particular, Venezuela's renowned orchestra program for low-income youth was showcased in several articles. It is now being offered in prisons, and has begun to inspire similar programs in the U.S. and Europe. For a roundup of coverage, visit [VenWorld](#).

### **VIO LAUNCHES INTERACTIVE NEWS BLOG**

Instead of just reading the news, you can now engage with it. Each week day, the VIO News Blog provides you with a summary and analysis of the top news on Venezuela. For the first time through the VIO, you will have the opportunity to comment on any story or issue you desire and help us build an interactive dialogue about breaking developments in Venezuela. [Make a comment today!](#)

[Click here to unsubscribe](#)

**Megan Morrissey**

**From:** Venezuela Information Office [vio@veninfo.org]  
**Sent:** Friday, July 11, 2008 2:56 PM  
**To:** media@veninfo.org  
**Subject:** VIO News & Action - Chavez Wrongly Accused in the Washington Post

**VIO Venezuela News and Action**

Dear Friends,

We need your help to stop the Washington Post from printing more lies about Venezuela!

In recent months, the media has consistently downplayed President Chavez's efforts to bring peace to Colombia. Instead, it spreads unproven allegations by Colombian officials that Venezuela supported the FARC (which the U.S. State Department deems a terrorist group). A Washington Post op-ed today makes this mistake, claiming: "we know from documents captured in a daring Colombian army raid into Ecuador in March... that Chávez had been secretly funding and pulling the strings of the FARC."

This is simply not true. The alleged evidence offered by Colombia has not been proven in any independent analysis, and its origins remain in question today. INTERPOL's report on a forensic examination of the documents in question stopped short of authenticating them.

Take action! Write a letter to the Post to remind them that Venezuela is not guilty of aiding the FARC, or any other "terrorist" group. Send 200 words or less to [letters@washpost.com](mailto:letters@washpost.com) and [letters@charleskrauthammer.com](mailto:letters@charleskrauthammer.com)

Here are some points to raise in your letter:

- 1- There is no proven evidence that Venezuela aided the FARC, as Colombian officials claim. INTERPOL conducted a forensic examination of the alleged evidence, but could not verify its source or authenticity. The allegations have not stood up to scrutiny.
- 2- President Chavez's humanitarian mediation in Colombia was an honest attempt to help bring about peace. He served as the chief negotiator of hostage talks that led the FARC to free six civilian captives. He did this to help the Colombian people, not the FARC.
- 3- Chavez has for years advocated a negotiated political solution to the Colombian conflict. He said on January 13<sup>th</sup> that he doesn't agree with the armed struggle, and reiterated this on June 8<sup>th</sup> by calling for



the FARC to release all hostages and lay down their arms.

**Thank you** for helping the VIO stop lies about Venezuela! As always, write to [vio@veninfo.org](mailto:vio@veninfo.org) to let us know if you took action by sending a letter to the editor.

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## Olivia Burlingame Gombri

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**From:** Olivia Burlingame Gombri [olivia@veninfo.org]  
**Sent:** Monday, July 14, 2008 11:49 AM  
**To:** 'Olivia Burlingame Gombri'  
**Subject:** PRESS ADVISORY- Wash DC Launch: CITGO/Citizens Energy Launch New Program in Washington DC

July 14, 2008

Dear Colleague,

Tomorrow in Washington, D.C. CITGO Petroleum Corporation CEO Alejandro Granado, Citizens Energy Chairman Joseph P. Kennedy II and Ambassador of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela Bernardo Alvarez will launch a national pilot program to provide low-income American households with energy efficient and environmentally friendly compact fluorescent light bulbs (CFLs). This is an extension of their discounted heating oil program and will target about 1,500 families in Washington DC.

The launch will take place at the home of Shirley and Claude Braxton at 11:30am, 1704 Constitution Ave., NE Washington, D.C. 20002. I hope that you or someone from your office will be able to attend. I would like to make sure that you meet the citizens of DC who will benefit from this program as well as the CEO's of the participating companies and the Ambassador of Venezuela.

Please find the press release following this letter. Feel free to call me with any questions you might have as well as to RSVP at 301-613-4767.

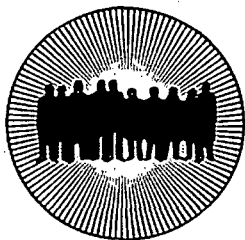
Sincerely, Olivia B. Gombri

**For Immediate Release:**

July 14, 2008

**Contacts:**

Olivia B. Gombri, 301-613-4767



CITIZENS  
ENERGY  
CORPORATION

a non-profit energy company

**PRESS RELEASE\*\*\*PRESS RELEASE\*\*\*PRESS RELEASE**

**CITGO, the Embassy of Venezuela and Citizens Energy Launch New Energy Efficient Lighting Program at Home of Washington, D.C. Resident**

WASHINGTON – Tomorrow in Washington, D.C., CITGO Petroleum Corporation CEO Alejandro Granado, Citizens Energy Chairman Joseph P. Kennedy II and Ambassador of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela Bernardo Alvarez will launch a national pilot program to provide low-income households with energy efficient and environmentally friendly compact fluorescent light bulbs (CFLs).

As with the low-income heating oil program inaugurated in 2005, this initiative is a partnership between CITGO, a wholly owned subsidiary of Petróleos de Venezuela (PDVSA), and the Boston-based nonprofit Citizen's Energy Corporation. Together, CITGO and Citizen's Energy will provide eligible households in Washington D.C. and ten other cities including Houston, Corpus Christi and Lake Charles with almost half a million CFLs. The initiative will also include education materials and workshops to help inform individuals about ways they can use energy more efficiently and in turn save on their electric bills.

Working with local community groups, the program will distribute light bulbs and energy conservation educational materials to approximately 23,000 households in the pilot cities. Qualified participants will participate in energy workshops sponsored by partner organizations. In total, the pilot program has the potential to save program participants nearly \$15 million and reduce their energy use by 165 million kilowatt-hours. In Washington D.C., the program will target 1,500 households and distribute an estimated 30,000 CFLs throughout the summer and early fall.

"I am proud that CITGO invests over \$100 million annually on social programs to improve the lives of those in need," said CITGO Chairman, President and CEO, Alejandro Granado. "The CITGO-Venezuela Energy Efficient Lighting Program will save money for recipients who struggle to make ends meet while also helping these communities learn more about energy efficiency and environmental conservation."

Simple energy-savings actions like those encouraged through this pilot program can make a big difference. According to the federal government, if every American home replaced just one light bulb with a CFL, the U.S. would save enough energy to light more than 3 million homes for a year, more than \$600 million annual energy costs, and prevent greenhouse gases equivalent to the emissions of more than 800,000 cars.

"The most cost effective and clean energy is the energy we don't use," said Citizens Energy Chairman Joseph P. Kennedy II. "We are proud to partner with CITGO Petroleum to help our most vulnerable households learn ways to use energy more efficiently, and in doing so, save energy, money and the environment."

The inspiration for the program came from a similar Venezuelan Government initiative called Misión Revolución Energética.

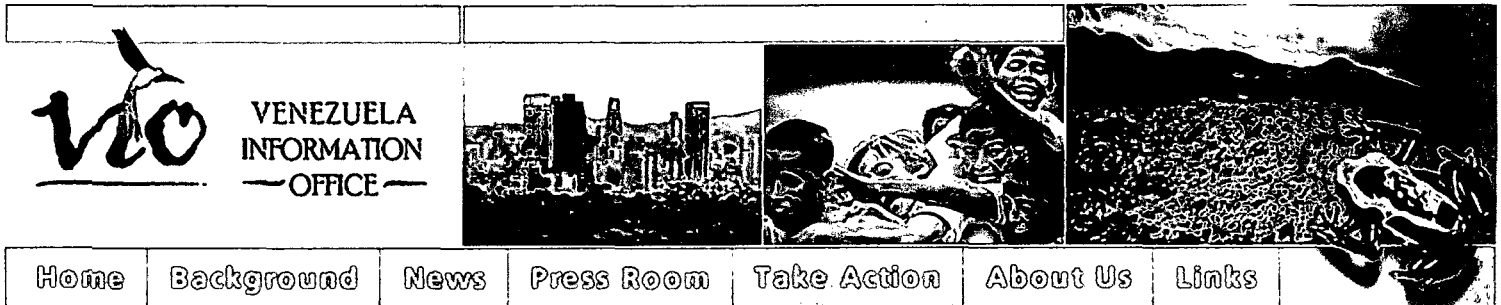
"This program is a counterpart to our efforts in Venezuela, where more than 60 million conventional light bulbs have been replaced by energy efficient ones through Misión Revolución Energética," said Bernardo Alvarez, Ambassador to the United States for the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela. "It is also proof of CITGO's commitment to social issues, which goes far beyond traditional corporate social responsibility, and of Venezuela's commitment to a new model of progressive development to confront the problems of poverty and environmental damage."

###

Olivia Burlingame Gombri  
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Blog: [www.venworld.org](http://www.venworld.org)

**Olivia Burlingame Goumbri**

**From:** Venezuela Information Office [vio@veninfo.org]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, July 16, 2008 8:56 AM  
**To:** olivia@veninfo.org  
**Subject:** Houston U R Invited to Citgo Energy Kick Off!



## VIO Venezuela la News and Action

Dear friends in  
Texas,

The CITGO-Venezuela Energy Efficient Lighting Program was launched nationally yesterday in Washington DC. On hand was the CEO of Citgo, the Ambassador of Venezuela, and the President of Citizens Energy. The program will provide compact fluorescent light bulbs (CFLs) to low-income

### The CITGO-Venezuela Energy Efficient Lighting Program



In Partnership with



CITIZENS  
ENERGY  
CORPORATION  
a non-profit energy company

**Please join CITGO Petroleum, Citizens Energy and the Embassy of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela at the launch of the CITGO-Venezuela Energy Efficient Lighting Program.**

**When:** Thursday, July 17, 2008 at 11:30am  
**Where:** 4502 White Rock St, Houston, TX 77051 713-733-1038  
**RSVP:** Email Kumasi Adoma at kadoma@citgo.com

THE ENERGY TO DO MORE



families in 11 US cities this year affording them the ability to practice energy efficiency while significantly reducing their electrical bills.

Tomorrow, they will kick off the program in Houston by holding a press conference and public event at the home of Houston resident Dolores Smith. In Houston alone, the program will target 7,000 households and distribute an estimated 140,000 CFLs throughout the summer and early fall.

We want you and your families to be a part of this! Please join us tomorrow and learn how you and your communities can participate.

[Click here to unsubscribe](#)

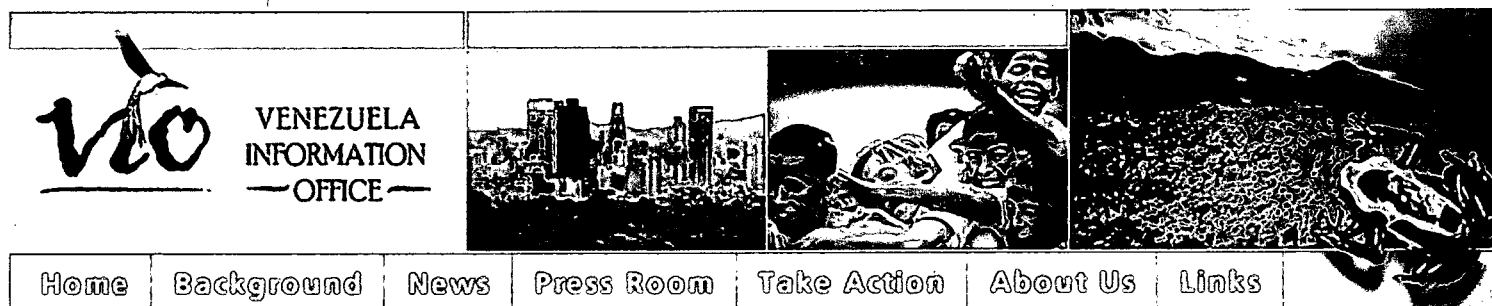
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## Olivia Burlingame Goumbri

**From:** Venezuela Information Office [vio@veninfo.org]  
**Sent:** Friday, August 01, 2008 10:19 AM  
**To:** olivia@veninfo.org  
**Subject:** DC, MD Celebrate Citgo Donation to Local non-profit



## VIO Venezuela News and Action

**Dear friends in the Washington DC metro area,**

This Monday, Citgo and Venezuela will announce a donation to a local immigrants rights organization to foster sustainable development and cooperatives. Please join us in celebrating this at a public press conference with the community. Details below.

### **CITGO to Make Donation to CASA de Maryland for Programs to Benefit Low-income and Immigrant Workers**

Over the past two years, CITGO, an indirect wholly owned subsidiary of Petróleos de Venezuela, S.A. (PDVSA), the national oil company of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, has provided assistance to communities served by CASA as part of its Discounted Heating Oil Program which has reached a total of 12,000 families in the Washington metro area. CASA will also be participating in CITGO's Energy Efficient Lighting Program, a pilot program which will deliver 12,000 CFLs to the area. This latest donation will foster sustainable development and directly benefit 5,000 participants by improving their economic well-being and overall quality of life. For the first time ever, CASA will be able to offer comprehensive educational, vocational training and economic development programs to create cooperatives. As in Venezuela, these social programs will empower some of the most disenfranchised communities in Maryland.

**WHO:** CITGO Chairman, President and CEO, Alejandro Granado  
Venezuelan Ambassador to the United States, Bernardo Alvarez  
Casa de Maryland President, Gustavo Torres

**WHAT:** Press Conference

**WHEN:** Monday, August 4, 2008 at 12:00 p.m.

**WHERE:** University United Methodist Church  
3621 Campus Drive  
College Park, MD 20740

For more information: 301-613-4767

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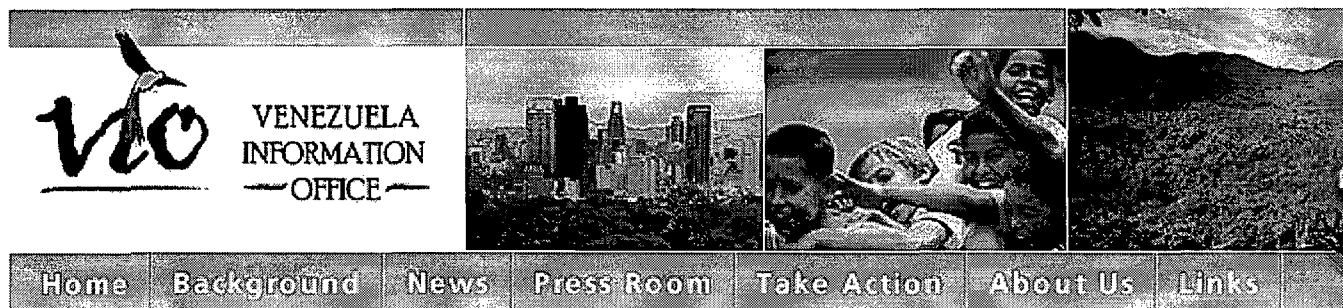
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**Megan Morrissey**

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**From:** Venezuela Information Office [newsandaction@veninfo.org]  
**Sent:** Friday, August 08, 2008 7:47 PM  
**To:** media@veninfo.org  
**Subject:** VIO News & Action-ICG Report Irresponsible and Dangerous

**VIO Venezuela News and Action**

Dear Colleagues,

Over the past few weeks, Venezuela has witnessed an intense amount of controversy at home and abroad. Much of it has been drummed up by opposition activists along with international media outlets who appear ready to call into question the validity of upcoming regional elections in November, if opposition demands are not met.

The first sign of this came in late July when the International Crisis Group published its 2008 report on Venezuela entitled "Venezuela: Political Reform or Regime Demise?" The report is alarming because 1) it is issued by a leading international organization tasked with identifying deadly conflicts before they happen, 2) it is filled with glaring mistakes and factually inaccurate information, and 3) the majority of sources are aligned with the opposition or are not disclosed.

The interactive timeline that accompanies the report doesn't fare much better. It is a sloppy piece of work that distorts well-known historical facts such as the coup d'etat. For the year 2002, ICG states, "In what amounts to a coup d'etat, the armed forces disobey orders to repress the protesters, and announce Chavez's resignation."

To anyone who is familiar with current day Venezuela, the findings and recommendations of the ICG report will be perceived as inadequate and inaccurate in certain instances. But for the many more international organizations, journalists, and policy makers who are much less knowledgeable, it will likely be taken seriously.

9/23/2008



For this reason, it is important that we set the record straight and clarify the key discrepancies published by the International Crisis Group on Venezuela. You can read our analysis, "International Crisis Group-Short on Facts, High on Bias" [here](#).

We encourage you to familiarize yourself with the issues and share it with whomever you see fit.

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**Megan Morrissey**

**From:** VIO News & Action [newsandaction@veninfo.org]

**Sent:** Thursday, August 28, 2008 2:44 PM

**To:** media@veninfo.org

**Subject:** VIO Venezuela News & Action - Accusations of Terrorism and Anti-Semitism Levelled by L.A. Times

**VIO Venezuela News and Action****LA TIMES WRONG ON VENEZUELA**

The Los Angeles Times continued its trend of biased reporting on Venezuela yesterday, running an article that claims the radical group Hezbollah is tolerated - even supported - by the Chavez administration. Help us remind the Times that Venezuela does not support terrorism, and demand that they correct the record!

Read the full article, entitled "Hezbollah presence in Venezuela feared."

Then, write a concise letter to the editor of 200 words or less and email it to [letters@latimes.com](mailto:letters@latimes.com)

Here are some points to mention in your letter:

- 1) The Venezuelan government does not support terrorism, in any form. OAS Secretary General Insulza has testified before Congress: "does Venezuela support terrorist groups? I don't think so. .... There is no evidence, and no member country, including this one [the U.S.] has offered the OAS such proof."
- 2) The Times article is based on just two unconvincing quotes by an anonymous "Western anti-terrorism official." This is not enough information on which to condemn Venezuela. Such an egregious lack of evidence is irresponsible, and makes clear the Times' bias.
- 3) Condemns of Venezuela by the U.S. Treasury and State Department are cited by the Times, but the Bush administration has never proven any of its allegations against the Chavez government. The Venezuelan officials accused of helping Hezbollah have attested that the charges are false, and no independent party has shown otherwise.
- 4) The State Department's reports on terrorism are highly politicized and do not always reflect reality. Venezuela was deemed "not cooperating fully" with anti-terror efforts, but its own security agenda has been hindered by a U.S. embargo on military equipment and refusals by the U.S. to honor extradition treaties.

5) Venezuela has been a strong advocate for peace in the region, lending a hand with hostage talks in Colombia and spearheading regional cooperation agreements and initiatives on food and energy security.

6) Venezuela under Chavez has a track record of religious tolerance, equality, and social inclusion.

### **NEW FACT SHEET ON JEWS IN VENEZUELA**

One more thing!

Be sure to read the VIO's new fact sheet on the relationship between the administration of President Chavez and the Jewish community in Venezuela and abroad. This topic is a very important one, considering the persistence of allegations like those made in the Times yesterday.

Earlier this month, President Chavez invited the leaders of prominent Jewish organizations (pictured at right) to begin a dialogue on improving understanding between this community and the Venezuelan government. All parties reported that the meeting was positive. The head of the Latin American Jewish Congress said, "The Jewish community is more at ease now with President Hugo Chávez, who demonstrated he is a great friend of the Jewish community and who wants to fight anti-Semitism in Latin America."



To read the fact sheet and find out more, [click here](#).

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